

DR. RAJENDRA PRASAD: CORRESPONDENCE AND SELECT DOCUMENTS

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Edited by
VALMIKI CHOUDHARY



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CORRESPONDENCE

PART I

1. *To Jawaharlal Nehru*

ALL INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE

URGENT

Camp: Bajajwadi
Wardha
January 1, 1940

My dear Jawaharlalji,

I wrote to the members of the Working Committee and also to you yesterday morning about the situation which has arisen in Orissa. Today a very serious situation has arisen in Bengal. You will recollect the resolution which we passed at the last meeting of the Working Committee, appointing an ad hoc committee to conduct the Congress elections in Bengal and leaving the Executive Council to function so far as other matters were concerned. It is reported in this morning's *Hitavada* that the Executive Council of the B.P.C.C. has passed a resolution deciding not to obey the Working Committee resolution and to continue to function. It characterises the Working Committee resolution as unconstitutional, ultra vires, ex parte and by several other adjectives. The operative portion is that the Executive Council will not obey the resolution and continue to act as it had been acting so far. The B.P.C.C. is going to meet on the 6th January 1940 and it is most likely that it will confirm the resolution of the Executive Council, or, at the best, it may direct the Executive Council to function and may in the meantime appeal to the Working Committee to review its resolution. This, of course, is only a mere guess. The question is what should be done now. It is impossible to allow such an open flouting by any Provincial Executive of the Working Committee's resolution. I have also got information that by another resolution it has resolved to hand over Rs.10,000 to Subhas Babu in view of the situation in the country. I have not seen the resolution dealing with this matter, but you will probably see it in papers before this reaches you. It is not clear whether these Rs.10,000, which are to be handed over, refer to the amount which was in the Secretary's hand, according to the auditor's report, or it refers to the money which is in bank and which is to be taken out and made over to Subhas Babu. If it is the former, then it may be only a paper transaction to save the face of the Secretary. If it is the latter, then it means, that the cash balance is to be made over to Subhas Babu, leaving practically nothing in the bank on behalf of the Provincial Committee. I think we cannot ignore all this and we have to meet and discuss the situation. There is nothing else for which we may have to meet soon, but this matter is important in itself to require a meeting of the Working Committee. I shall await the resolution of the Provincial Committee, which is to be held on the 6th of January 1940. In the meantime, I shall be obliged

Dr. Rajendra Prasad:

if you kindly let me know what you think should be done. If you agree that the Working Committee should meet, then I suggest 15th January 1940 for the meeting.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

2. To the Secretary, Bengal Provincial Congress Committee

ALL INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE

Camp: Bajajwadi
Wardha
January 1, 1940

Dear Friend,

I have seen reports of a resolution passed by the Executive Council of the B.P.C.C. at its meeting held on 30th December 1939, from which it appears that the Executive Council has decided to disregard the resolution of the Working Committee passed at its meeting held on 18th to 22nd December 1939 appointing an ad hoc committee to conduct Congress elections in Bengal. It is also reported that the Executive Council has passed another resolution to the effect that Rs.10,000 out of the B.P.C.C. Funds be handed over to Sjt. Subhas Chandra Bose, in view of the present situation in the country. I shall be obliged if you send me by return post authenticated copies of the resolutions passed by the Executive Council at its last meeting. In case the report in the Press is correct, it would appear to amount to a clear and definite defiance of the resolution of the Working Committee on the part of the Executive Council and the matter will have to be considered by the Working Committee. Please send me any explanation which you or the Executive Council may have to offer on the points above mentioned for the consideration of the Working Committee at its next meeting, which should reach me by the 10th January 1940 at the latest. The Executive Council may depute any of its office-bearers or anyone else, if it so chooses, to place before the Working Committee whatever will have to be said on behalf of the Executive Council. The exact date of the next meeting of the Working Committee will be communicated to you, when it is fixed.

If the resolution sanctioning the handing over of the bulk of the B.P.C.C. fund to Sjt. Subhas Chandra Bose has not been given effect to, please hold it in abeyance until further instructions from the Working Committee.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad
President

The Secretary
Bengal Provincial Congress Committee
93 Premchand Boral Street, Calcutta.

3. *From Jawaharlal Nehru*

Anand Bhawan
Allahabad
January 3, 1940

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I have just returned to Allahabad and received your letter of January 1st about Bengal. There can be no doubt that the resolution passed by the Executive of the B.P.C.C. is in defiance of the Working Committee. The first question to be considered is how far the Election Committee appointed by the Working Committee can function now. If it can function it must of course do so as effectively as possible.

If some members of it resign, they might be replaced by others by you as President. Even if this Committee can function in some districts and not all it should function there for the purpose of electing delegates to the next Congress.

If it cannot function at all then it means that Bengal cannot return any delegates to the next session of the Congress and is otherwise disaffiliated from the Congress organisation. We can have the satisfaction of disaffiliating Bengal, but it is clear that for some time at least there will be no proper functioning of the Congress in Bengal. A vacuum is created and we cannot do anything further in the matter unless people in Bengal get a move on.

It seems to me that very little can be done by a meeting of the Working Committee in mid-January, except to disaffiliate the B.P.C.C. I would suggest that for the present no such meeting be held but that some action be taken by you as President. This action will be in continuation of your letter to the B.P.C.C. dated January 1st. You might inform them definitely that the resolution of the Working Committee stands in so far as elections are concerned and the Election Committee will continue to function for the purpose of electing delegates to the next Congress. Further that any opposition to this and defiance of the Working Committee's resolution is a very serious matter which must be considered by the Working Committee. They can show cause why further action should not be taken against the B.P.C.C. But this showing of cause as well as any possible appeal that the B.P.C.C. might make should not delay the work of the Election Committee which must go on. It will not injure us in any way if there is some delay in the final decision of the Working Committee in the matter. It might indeed be advantageous from the point of view of the elections, though the difference will not be great.

Regarding the Rs. 10,000, you have already suggested that effect should not be given to the B.P.C.C. resolution to hand over this fund to Subhas Babu. I doubt if you can control this money in any event under existing circumstances, even if it exists.

All you can do is what you have already done in the matter and you can make your directions clearer.

If you feel that a meeting of the Working Committee would be held about the 15th January then the Committee might meet on that date, but it will be exceedingly inconvenient for me to attend it as I have already fixed up various tour programmes which I should not like to upset. In any event the Committee can meet without me this time.

At such a meeting Maulana Azad's presence is of course desirable as he is intimately connected with Bengal affairs. It is possible that this meeting might interfere with his visit to the Punjab. This will be exceedingly unfortunate as already people in the Punjab have lost all faith in his ever visiting them owing to numerous postponements of his visit. If it is at all possible, he should go there as early as possible and stay there at least for 10 days.

I cannot for the moment trace your letter about Orissa.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Babu Rajendra Prasad
Bajajwadi, Wardha.

4. *From Abul Kalam Azad*

ALL INDIA CONGRESS PARLIAMENTARY SUB-COMMITTEE

19A, Ballygunge Circular Road
Calcutta
January 3, 1940

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I am fully in agreement with your opinion which you have formed about Utkal.

We have decided to take a final step about Bengal, if the Provincial Committee to be held on the 6th allows the decision of the Executive to stand as it is. The Working Committee should be called for this, not on the 15th, but earlier. You have written to the Bengal Provincial to send its statement to you till the 10th January. You can call the Working Committee on the 11th by telegram. I write this simply because I want to get a chance of going sooner to the Punjab.

Yours sincerely,
A.K. Azad

Dr. Rajendra Prasad
President, Indian National Congress
Wardha.

5. From Jawaharlal Nehru

Allahabad
January 4, 1940

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I have just sent a telegram to you to the following effect:

SUGGEST YOUR SENDING ONE HUNDRED POUNDS ON BEHALF CONGRESS
TO TURKEY FOR EARTHQUAKE RELIEF

I think that it would be a graceful act for the Congress to send a contribution to the Relief Fund in Turkey. The earthquake has been a terrible one and a gesture from us will be appreciated. It is not usual for the Congress directly to contribute to relief funds for the purpose. I feel, however, that an exception should be made in this case. It will not be worth while to start a relief fund on behalf of the Congress. As you perhaps know Sikander Hyat Khan has started a fund. It would seem as if we were competing with him. If you agree to my proposal, our contribution should be sent to the Turkish Consul General in Calcutta. Before this is sent, an intimation should be sent to him by telegram and letter.

I have just seen in the Press that you have sent a cable to the Turkish President. I am glad of this. It is just possible that the U.P.P.C.C. might send a contribution of Rs.500. I am consulting with my colleagues.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

6. From Abul Kalam Azad

ALL INDIA CONGRESS PARLIAMENTARY SUB-COMMITTEE

19A, Ballygunge Circular Road
Calcutta
January 5, 1940

My dear Rajendra Babu,

Many telegrams have been received from the Punjab, saying that the Tribunal there has been formed on party lines by the P.C.C., and which is not expected to work in a non-partisan spirit. It is also said that the men selected for the Tribunal have no social standing. An ordinary clerk of the Pratap Office has been made a member.

The Tribunal would have been appointed in August last. No complaint was received at that time. The difficulty now is that the complaints are pouring in, just

at the time of the election. I cannot make out what to do just at present in this matter. The election of the delegates will begin there from the 8th January.

Moreover, the complaints regarding the P.C.C. should go to the office, or direct to you--not to me.

However, I am sending the telegrams to you. You may please wire them some reply.

There is a complaint from Jammu that the Punjab Congress has ignored their delegation. The telegram is enclosed herewith, for inquiry and necessary action.

Yours sincerely,
A.K. Azad

Dr. Rajendra Prasad
Wardha.

Enclosure not included

7. From Vallabhbhai Patel

ALL INDIA CONGRESS PARLIAMENTARY SUB-COMMITTEE

68 Marine Drive
Bombay
5th January 1940

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I have received your letter of the 31st December. I am enclosing [a] copy of Tandonji's letter regarding Sethiji's resignation in reply to my reference to him as suggested by Jawaharlal. Regarding your circular letter about Orissa affairs I had already talked to you on the telephone. I have no doubt that the President's rulings were both wrong and as Mr. Nilakantha deliberately wanted to be obstructive and create a deadlock by abusing his position as President, those who differed from him were justified in meeting separately and electing another President in his place. The majority was quite substantial and there has been no real injustice done to anybody. Whatever we may do we must see that the minority which is mischievous and obstructive does not get the better of the majority by the abuse of their position. I am going to Ahmedabad this evening.

I have received your urgent letter of the 1st January. I agree with you that the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee or its office-bearers cannot be allowed to flout the instructions of the Working Committee and as President you are free to

take such strong action as you may deem fit but if you desire that the Working Committee should meet I am prepared to come there on the 15th morning.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Babu Rajendra Prasad
Bajajwadi
Wardha.

Enclosure not included.

8. *To Mohammad Yunus*

Wardha
January 9, 1940

My dear Mr. Yunus,

I have seen your appeal in the Press. * I agree with you that every well-wisher of the country is much exercised over the growing tension between the Hindus and the Muslims and it is the duty of everyone to help to remove it. I therefore welcome your desire to try to settle, if possible, the causes of difference within the Province, leaving the larger question of the country as a whole to be settled later, if necessary. I have always been anxious and I know the Provincial Congress Committee will be ready to do what it can to bring about such settlement. I shall talk over the matter with you when I return to Patna and I shall see if we can remove the causes of friction and misunderstanding which have arisen.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

*See Appendix

9. *From Vallabhbhai Patel*

ALL INDIA CONGRESS PARLIAMENTARY SUB-COMMITTEE

68 Marine Drive
Bombay
11th January 1940

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I have received your letter of the 7th January 1940. It is almost impossible for me to do anything in the matter of collections for Turkish Disaster relief. Nearer

at home in parts of Gujarat and Kathiawar there is terrible disaster due to severe famine. Cattle have died in lacs and the people are suffering from starvation and even scarcity of water. I have not been able to do anything for them as yet, but I am trying hard to enlist the sympathy of people here and in Ahmedabad for getting their support. It is a very hard task. The Government is now collecting subscription through the Red Cross Society and you will have to rest content with the appeal made by you.

I am arriving there on the 14th evening or the 15th morning and expect the Sind people also to come there at that time. I am afraid I cannot come there before the 15th.

I understand there has been some trouble in the matter of selection of candidate from Multan constituency in the Punjab. As I received a wire while I was at Bardoli from Dr. Gopichand [to the effect that] the Provincial Executive had unanimously made a recommendation and he also agreed with it, I gave my approval. It seems that Maulana is not in agreement with it, so on getting a telephone from him at Ahmedabad, I cancelled the selection giving Maulana a free hand in the matter. I now hear that Dr. Gopichand has tendered his resignation because Maulana does not approve of his recommendation. I do not know all the facts about the matter.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Babu Rajendra Prasad
Bajajwadi
Wardha (C.P.).

10. *From Vallabhbhai Patel*

ALL INDIA CONGRESS PARLIAMENTARY SUB-COMMITTEE

68 Marine Drive
Bombay-1
12th January 1940

My dear Rajendrababu,

I have received your letter of the 11th January. I am enclosing herewith a copy of a letter which I wrote to Maulana yesterday and Dr. Gopichand's letter* which I received today. It seems Maulana's action has upset Gopichand and his resignation has been the natural sequel to it. I do not know why Shanno Devi has been preferred. The recommendation of the Punjab Provincial Executive was unanimous and ordinarily we do not interfere with such recommendations, but Maulana has his own way of doing things. We are coming there on the 14th evening or on the 15th morning from Yeotmal.

You know that I have to go to Raipur on the 18th and they have fixed my programme for the whole of 19th in Raipur. I am afraid I cannot reach Wardha before the 20th morning.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Babu Rajendra Prasad
Congress President
Wardha.

*Not included

Enclosure:

(Copy of letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to Abul Kalam Azad)

68 Marine Drive
Bombay
11th January 1940

My dear Maulana Saheb,

I have received your letter of the 5th and 7th January. My attitude in the matter of Mr. Devraj Sethi is not correctly represented to you. When he met me in Bombay he brought a letter from Rajendrababu informing me that he was in favour of taking a lenient view in the matter and he told me that you had also written to me to the same effect. But when I got your letter in which your attitude was clear and unambiguous I wrote to Dr. Gopichand to inform Mr. Sethi that his representation to me about (Maulana's) attitude was not correct.

We could not finish our conversation on the telephone at Ahmedabad. I am enclosing copies of telegrams I had received about the Multan constituency. When I saw that there was no dispute and all were unanimous, I gave my approval—particularly when I got Rajendrababu's telegram from Wardha. There was some misunderstanding about the constituency while we were talking on the phone, as I had received another telegram from Dr. Gopichand for another constituency. Since our telephonic conversation I wired to him to treat the selection as cancelled and to put himself in touch with you as you are dealing with this matter. I hear from the Press reports today that he has tendered his resignation on that issue. I do not know what has happened, but I hope things would be adjusted amicably.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

(Copy of telegram from the Secretary, Punjab Provincial Congress Committee, Lahore, to Vallabhbhai Patel)

Lahore
January 2, 1940

SARDAR VALLABHBHAI PATEL
BARDOLI

WESTERN MULTAN RURAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY BY-ELECTION WORKING COMMITTEE UNANIMOUSLY COMMENDS THAKURDUTT VAID MULTANI KINDLY WIRE CONSENT WITH MESSAGE NOMINATION PAPERS FILING DATE FIFTEENTH JANUARY

SOHANSINGH
SECRETARY
PUNJAB PROVINCIAL CONGRESS COMMITTEE

(Copy of telegram from Dr. Gopichand Bhargava to Vallabhbhai Patel)

Lahore
January 3, 1940

SARDAR VALLABHBHAI PATEL
BARDOLI

WORKING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS THAKURDUTT MULTANI STOP NO OTHER SUITABLE CANDIDATE AVAILABLE I AGREE PLEASE NOMINATE HIM

GOPICHAND

11. To Vallabhbhai Patel

Wardha
January 12, 1940

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I have just received your letter No. 1, dated the 11th January 1940. As regards the Turkey Relief Fund, I do not expect any big sum. If we could altogether raise £1,000, I should feel quite satisfied. If I had known that so many appeals have been issued, I would have not issued mine. As a matter of fact I waited for several days before I issued it, after consulting Bapu. However, we shall see when we meet here what can be done in the matter.

As regards Punjab nominations, I know nothing except that I received telegrams from Dr. Gopichand, suggesting Pt. to you. I read in papers that the rival, who has been preferred to Pt. Thakur Dutta is Shanno Devi. I do not know how far this is correct. I believe it is the same lady who contested the seat against

the **Congress**. I am not even aware when the elections are going to be held and the matter can await the Working Committee meeting.

I have already wired to you that I have fixed the meeting of the Working Committee for the 19th inst. We could not have it earlier. It was not possible to get all members to meet here on the 15th. The principal matter, of course, for consideration is the Bengal situation. One of the resolutions of the B.P.C.C. has authorised the President of the B.P.C.C. and S.J. Sarat Chandra Bose to represent the cause of B.P.C.C. before the Working Committee and so they will be here at the meeting. I have just received a telegram from Jawaharlalji saying that he will try to attend the meeting on the 19th. Yesterday's telegram from him said that he would not be able as he had fixed tour programme.

More when we meet.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
68 Marine Drive, Bombay.

12. *From Vallabhbhai Patel*

ALL INDIA CONGRESS PARLIAMENTARY SUB-COMMITTEE

68 Marine Drive
Bombay
24 January 1940

My dear Rajendrababu,

I have received your letter of the 22nd January along with the enclosures. Sardar Sohan Singh came to me with the Punjab Committee's recommendations for filling up of the vacancy caused by Lala Shamlal's death in the Central Assembly, but I have referred him to Maulana Saheb. I do not wish to deal with such matters, as a lot of confusion and misunderstanding is created in the matter of selections in which our viewpoints differ. I have therefore decided to leave all matter of such selections to Maulana so far as Punjab, Frontier and Bengal are concerned.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Babu Rajendra Prasad
Congress President
Congress Nagar, Ramgarh.

13. *From Mahatma Gandhi*

Wardhaganj
January 31, 1940

RASHTRAPATI RAJENDRA PRASAD
PATNA
ADVERTISEMENTS MAY BE TAKEN

BAPU

14. *To Vallabhbhai Patel*

Patna
February 1, 1940

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I am herewith enclosing a copy of a letter from Dr. Ghosh. Will you please deal with the Assembly attendance matter? I have again got fever and cough since the 30th January. They are both persisting yet and I am rather weak.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

Enclosure not included

15. *From Mahatma Gandhi*

Wardhaganj
February 2, 1940

RASHTRAPATI RAJENDRA PRASAD
PATNA

WHAT ABOUT ILLNESS WIRE WHAT WAS DONE ON REPORT VIOLENCE ENQUIRY
PUBLISHED PAPERS LEAVING FOR DELHI TOMORROW

BAPU

16. *From Benoy Krishna Rohtagi*

Calcutta
2nd February 1940

DR RAJENDRA PRASAD
PATNA

EXCESS PROFITS BILL EXTREMELY RUINOUS TO COUNTRY'S INDUSTRIAL
COMMERCIAL PROGRESS KINDLY INTERVENE AND INSTRUCT CONGRESS

ASSEMBLY MEMBERS TO PARTICIPATE REJECTION OF BILL CEYLON ALREADY
REJECTED SUCH BILL.

BENOY KRISHNA ROHTAGI
PRESIDENT
UPPER INDIA ASSOCIATION
CALCUTTA

17. *From Jawaharlal Nehru*

Anand Bhawan
Allahabad
February 4, 1940

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I have just seen your [letter about] Utkal P.C.C. I entirely agree with you [that the rulings] given by the President were wrong and improper and that the motion of censure was completely in order and should have been allowed. The only doubt in my mind is about the propriety of accepting the decisions of the 76 members who met subsequently. I should like to have the version of the other side before finally committing myself. So far, as far as I can see, you have only heard the case of one side. I agree with you that we must not encourage a small faction preventing the majority from functioning and would therefore be inclined to accept the new committee as formed. This should function temporarily and hold elections when of course another committee will be formed. All this would be ordinarily subject to my hearing the other side. There is no time for this and therefore you should take the final decision after you have heard from the other party, that is, Pandit Nilakantha Das and Pandit Godavaris Mishra.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Shri Rajendra Prasad
Bajajwadi
Wardha.

18 *From Jawaharlal Nehru*

February 6, 1940

RAJENDRA PRASAD
SADAQUATASHRAM
PATNA

UP UPPERHOUSE ELECTION FIFTEENTH MANY CONGRESS DELEGATES

ENGAGED CAN YOU PERMIT OUR HOLDING DELEGATES MEETING PRESIDENTIAL
ELECTION SIXTEENTH MORNING WIRE ALLAHABAD

JAWAHARLAL

19 *To Jawaharlal Nehru*

Kanpur
6th February 1940

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU
CARE DISTRICT COLLECTOR
KANPUR

HAVE FIXED WORKING COMMITTEE 19TH PURPOSELY DELAYING TO ENABLE
YOU ADJUST YOUR PROGRAMME IF AT ALL POSSIBLE PLEASE ATTEND

RAJENDRA PRASAD

20. *From Vallabhbhai Patel*

ALL INDIA CONGRESS PARLIAMENTARY SUB-COMMITTEE

68 Marine Drive
Bombay
6th February 1940

My dear Rajendrababu,

I have received your letters of the 1st and 2nd February together with the enclosures. I do not think that any useful purpose would be served by allowing the Central Assembly Members of our Congress Party to attend the session at this stage for the purpose of offering opposition to the Excess Profits Tax Bill. Any modification of our resolution of the previous Working Committee meeting on this subject would simply expose us to ridicule without getting any counterbalancing advantage. The capitalists who will generally be affected by this Bill will not support us to the extent to which we would ask our Party to go in this matter. The Congress Party can only oppose the Bill altogether, but it appears that the capitalists are anxious to have a settlement and secure a reduction of the percentage, which they are sure to get. You know in the last meeting of the Working Committee Jawaharlal was strongly opposed to the question of reconsidering this resolution of the return of the Congress members to the Central Assembly. We cannot alter the resolution of the Working

Committee on our own responsibility. I am personally not in favour of it.

I am sorry to hear your relapse. I hope you will soon get better.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Babu Rajendra Prasad
Sadaquat Ashram
Dighaghat
Patna.

21. *From Vallabhbhai Patel*

ALL INDIA CONGRESS PARLIAMENTARY SUB-COMMITTEE

68 Marine Drive
Bombay
6th February 1940

My dear Rajendrababu,

Some time back Maulana Abul Kalam Azad sent me a letter asking me to issue instructions that the proposals in connection with the Parliamentary Sub-Committee affairs from the Provinces of Punjab, Frontier, U P. and Bengal should be sent to him for disposal so that there may be no confusion. I am enclosing herewith a copy of it for your perusal. I wrote to him in reply that I have decided to leave such matters to him for disposal hereafter. Yesterday I received a letter from him in connection with the case of Sjt. Devraj Sethi and a copy of which I am enclosing for your information. I had written to him that he should deal with this matter as he had already informed them that he will pass final orders in the matter at the time of his visit to Lahore. I do not know why he wants me to decide this question now. You were in favour of taking a lenient view in this matter. I consulted Tandonji as suggested by you and he writes that the matter may be left to Dr. Gopichand, the leader of the Congress Assembly Party, who may decide in the manner he thinks best. It seems that Dr. Satyapal and others have been sending representations to Maulana again for taking action against Sethiji. Instead of deciding or giving any opinion about it he simply leaves it to me. I want your advice as to what should be done about this matter finally.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Enclosure 1:

(Copy of letter from Abul Kalam Azad to Vallabhbhai Patel)

19-A, Ballygunge Circular Road
Calcutta
January 25, 1940

My dear Vallabhbhai,

The situation which arose in connection with the Multan by-election seems to have been caused by some in the working of the Parliamentary Sub-Committee. The Punjab Provincial applied for the approval of one and the same from two different places, at the same time. It wanted your approval as Chairman of the Sub-Committee, and mine, as a member of the Sub-Committee in charge of the Province. We both were in the dark about each other. You did not get the application of Shanno Devi, and therefore you gave your approval. I had received her application, and I, therefore, hesitated in giving approval.

In order to avoid complication, we had divided the work between ourselves in 1937, and had informed the Provinces accordingly. But I do not know how the Provinces failed to abide by the division. They began to send a matter to you, another to Rajen Babu and a third to me. We did not take any notice of this irregularity. The result is that the Punjab created a situation unnecessarily by asking approval from two places, at one and the same time, and you and I had to form two different opinions about one and the same matter.

Recently I read in the papers that elections of the Upper House in U.P. are about to take place. But I have received no information about it from there. Probably they might have written to you and got your approval.

I think that we would once again make this matter clear between ourselves, in order that a situation like that of the Punjab may not arise again. If the division of work we had made in 1937, according to which we have been working since then, still holds good, then a circular might be sent on behalf of you to the Provincial Congress Committees and the Assembly Parties of U.P., the Punjab, Bengal, and the Frontier. They should be reminded therein that they should take directions and approval from me in all matters concerning the by-elections and the parliamentary activities.

Rajendra Babu had to deal with matters relating to Bihar, Assam, and Orissa. He could not give much time to it owing to his indifferent health. Nevertheless, this should continue in future.

Yours sincerely,
A.K. Azad

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
68 Marine Drive
Bombay.

Enclosure 2:

(Copy of letter from Abul Kalam Azad to Vallabhbhai Patel)

19-A, Ballygunge Circular Road
Calcutta
January 29, 1940

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I am receiving numerous letters from Mr. Sethi. He is also sending recommendations from other persons. I think this matter should not be kept in suspension any further. You may give whatever decision you think fit in this matter. I shall have no objection.

Yours sincerely,
A.K. Azad

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
68 Marine Drive, Bombay.

22. To Jawaharlal Nehru

Wardha
6th February 1940

My dear Jawaharlalji,

After consulting Maulana we decided not to have a meeting of the Working Committee on the 19th inst. I will issue instructions for carrying out of the resolution of the Working Committee regarding the ad hoc committee in August. I understand from members and Dr. Roy that many of the districts will accept the Working Committee's decision and so that Province is not likely to go unrepresented. Of course this will be a dispute which will have to be considered and decided

I wired to you in reply to your telegram suggesting a donation of Rs. 1,500 from the Congress funds for Turkish Earthquake relief. I hope you have given your suggestion to Kripalaniji and he has acted according to it. I made the appeal after consulting Bapu. But I find that members had issued another appeal and there is such a plethora of appeals for a separate fund [that] I wonder whether we should keep a separate fund or merge it with any other fund. Now that once an appeal has been made I should naturally like that it should not be closed. You have done well by contributing from the provincial fund. I trust other committees will follow this trend apart from receiving funds from the public.

I asked *** on this *** to visit the Punjab soon and mentioned to him that it was your wish that there should be no delay. He said he would go there soon. Now that there is to be no W.C. in the middle of June, we can certainly go after making

and have committee more regularly [sic].

I am here till about 18th or 19th April after which I go to Patna.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

***Portions of the letter moth-eaten

23. *From Vallabhbhai Patel*

ALL INDIA CONGRESS PARLIAMENTARY SUB-COMMITTEE

68 Marine Drive
Bombay
9th February 1940

My dear Rajendrababu,

I have received your letter of the 7th February together with its enclosure. I have already written to you about my view in the matter of removing the ban from the Central Assembly so as to allow the Congress Party Members to attend it in order to defeat the Excess Profits Tax Bill. After receiving your letter today I discussed it with Jawaharlal who saw me this afternoon. I had also discussed this matter with Mr. Bhulabhai Desai and we all are of the same opinion that the ban should not be removed, and hence you have not to take the trouble to ascertain the views of other members in the matter.

I am sorry to hear that your cough is still persisting and you feel weak. It means that you may not be able to come to Malikanda.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Babu Rajendra Prasad
Congress President
Sadaquat Ashram
Dighaghat, Patna.

24. *To Vallabhbhai Patel*

Sadaquat Ashram
Patna
February 12, 1940

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I received your letters Nos. 38 and 40 of the 6th February 1940. As regards Mr. Sethi's case, Maulana is now on his way to Punjab and was probably at Delhi

yesterday, so you may leave it to him to decide it on the spot after hearing all parties concerned. I have also received letters from Dr. Satyapal in this connection but have not done anything as the matter was not being dealt with by me. I do not propose to say anything about the merits of the case. They are all well known and I will not mind whatever decision is taken.

As regards the Excess Profits Tax Bill, I was not at all anxious or desirous that Congress Members should attend the Assembly. I only forwarded to you the representations which I had received. After reading the debate I am inclined to agree that the presence of our Members would not have been of any use.

I am enclosing herewith a copy of the report of Mr. Abdul Quayum about Sukkur riots. I do not know what steps we can take in this subject at this stage. He seems to think that although K.B. Allahbaksh has bungled in the matter but there is no better substitute in the Province. I read in the papers that the Hindu Independent Party has tabled a vote of no confidence and the Congress Party is probably going to support the motion. I suppose this means dismissal of the Allahbaksh Ministry, unless he can gather together enough supporters to defeat the League, the Hindu Party, and the Congress Party jointly. As I have not heard anything from anybody about the developments there, I am not in a position to judge. I suppose you have been in touch. I am circulating this report to all the members of the Working Committee. As I have not got sufficient copies I shall be obliged if you kindly pass on your copy to Sj. Bhulabhai Desai after you have done with it with a request that it may be brought at the time of the next Working Committee. It is, of course, not intended for publication.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

Enclosure not included

25. *From Jawaharlal Nehru*

THE NATIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

Bombay
February 13, 1940

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I enclose a copy of the circular I have issued to the Members of the Planning Committee and the Chairmen of the Sub-Committees. We had a meeting of the Chairmen and Secretaries of Sub-Committees on the 11th February and this circular embodies the various tentative decisions arrived at. This will give you some general idea of our line of approach.

I am very sorry that our work has been delayed and we have not been able to keep to the time-table which was submitted to you last year. We hope, however, to finish with the present stage of the Planning Committee and to be ready with our report by the end of June or possibly in July. This report, when ready, will of course be presented to the President of the Congress. I might add that it is our intention to deal with the various points in a somewhat tentative way so as to express the various viewpoints advanced and, though indicating preferences, leave the final decision to the Congress.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Enclosure not included

26. *From Vallabhbhai Patel*

68 Marine Drive
Bombay-1
16th February 1940

My dear Rajendrababu,

I have returned here this morning in order to catch the train to Calcutta this evening. I am going by the Nagpur Mail, reaching Calcutta on the 18th morning. From the reports in the Press it seems that you would not be able to come to Malikanda, so we will meet at Patna on the 28th.

The other instalment of Rs.25,000 has been sent to you today and I hope your immediate difficulties will be solved. You will get plenty of money at the time of the session.

I have just received a copy of Mr. Abdul Quayum's report about the Sind situation which you sent to me and I will go through it, but it is difficult for us to give advice in the changing conditions of that Province. It seems that our party is sharply divided and the Hindu Party is also not of one mind. The Ministry has been defeated, but on the alternative they are not agreed. I hope their attitude does not result in a fresh election, as any such election at this stage would give a thumping majority to the Muslim League.

I do not know whether you have invited Rajaji to the Working Committee meeting. I think it would be better to do so though I am not sure that he would come.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Babu Rajendra Prasad
President, Congress
Dighaghat, Patna.

27. To Vallabhbhai Patel

Ramgarh
February 21, 1940

My dear Vallabhbhai,

A correspondent from Bhagalpore has drawn my attention to a statement made by Mr. Nariman as President of C.P. and Berar Forward Bloc Conference held recently at Betul. I am sending you extracts from that statement relating to funds and accounts. Will you kindly enquire from Bapu if he received any complaint from Mr. Nariman of the kind mentioned by him? It must have been during the period when Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru or Sjt. Subhas Chandra Bose was President. I am writing to Pt. Jawaharlal also.

As regards the complaint about misappropriation which has gone to criminal court, the fact is that Mr. Nariman never complained to me but Mrs. Perin Captain and Mr. Prabhu of Bombay did complain to me. I wrote to the P.C.C. for explanation and papers and was going to look into them, when I read one morning in the newspapers that the matter had been taken to criminal court and all the papers had been seized under orders of court. It was not possible for me to pursue the matter any further and it is still pending in court. May I request you to let me have all the facts to enable me to issue a statement. Also you may let me know about P.C.C.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

P.S. I am sending you copy of a letter received from Bhulabhai today. What do you think should be done? Please let me have your views in the matter at an early date and oblige.

Rajendra Prasad

Enclosure not included

28. To Abul Kalam Azad

Ramgarh
February 21, 1940

My dear Maulana Sahib,

I am sending you copy of a letter I have received from Bhulabhai today. I have sent copies of it to Vallabhbhai, Jawaharlalji, Kripalaniji also and asked them to let me have their opinions. If you think the members of Parliament should be invited then you may cable them or if you like I can do so.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

P.S. I have made arrangements for your stay at Patna. For other members of the W.C., during the meeting of the W.C., at Patna, but I have received a letter from Mr. Yunus today offering to put you up with himself. If you would prefer to stay with him, please let me know of this. I can inform him, otherwise my own arrangement stands. If Dr Mahmud were in Patna, then no question would arise but he is not there these days.

Rajendra Prasad

Enclosure not included

29. To Jawaharlal Nehru

Camp Ramgarh
February 21, 1940

My dear Jawaharlalji,

I am enclosing extracts from a report of speech delivered by Mr. Nariman as President of C.P. & Berar Forward Bloc Conference held at Betul recently and published in the *Forward Bloc*. One complaint is that he brought to the notice of Mahatmaji and the Congress President certain cases of misappropriation of funds of Bombay P.C.C. when he himself was the President of Bombay P.C.C., but no notice was taken of it. If there was any such complaint it must have been either during your time or when S.J. Subhas Bose was President. May I request you to look into the matter and let me know the fact so that I may issue a statement.

As regards the complaint about misappropriation which has gone to criminal court, the fact is that S.Jt. Nariman never complained to me but Mrs. Perin Captain and Mr. Prabhu of Bombay did complain to me. I wrote to the P.C.C. for explanation and papers and was going to look into them, when I read one morning in the papers that the matter had been taken to criminal court and all the papers had been seized under orders of court. It was not possible for me to pursue the matter any further and it is still pending in court. May I request you to let me have all the facts to enable me to issue a statement.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

P.S. I am sending you copy of a letter received from Bhulabhai today. What do you think should be done? Please let me have your views in the matter and oblige.

Rajendra Prasad

Enclosures not included

30. *From Jawaharlal Nehru*

Anand Bhawan
Allahabad
February 22, 1940

My dear Rajendra Babu,

Regarding the cablegram received by Bhulabhai from C.B. Vakil, I am clearly of opinion that there should be no invitation from us, formal or informal, to Members of the British Parliament to visit India. I think that any such move on our part, howsoever non-committal it might appear to be, will undoubtedly put us in a wrong position. It would be a kind of an appeal to Parliament. It would mean that we [consider] the Members of Parliament, if not as judges, at least as counsellors. It would further mean that we are prepared to function within the structure imposed upon us by Parliament. Lastly, it would indicate an excessive desire on our part to come to terms anyhow with the British Government. All this will have a bad effect in England as well as in India. More especially so, after the recent speeches of Zetland and company. Officially the British Government has told us what it thinks about us [For] us then to go to semi-official people is a sign of weakness which will be interpreted as such everywhere and will strengthen Zetland and company.

Apart from this, there is no doubt that a Parliamentary delegation will consist of second rate or third rate people. They will come here and try to boss it over everybody and to balance the scales evenly, as they will put it, between the Congress and the Muslim League and other groups. All this will bring out all the wrong and disruptive tendencies in India.

Thirdly, I do not understand who is fathering this move. Dr. C.B. Vakil is a good man against whom I have nothing. But he is not in touch very much with political occurrences. I believe that the nationalist group which is mentioned is a small group under the inspiration of Pulin Seal who is an unsafe man to deal with in this connection.

I am, therefore, definitely of opinion that no encouragement whatever should be given on our part to this move. In fact it should be clearly stated in the course of a letter that we see little good from British Parliamentarians visiting India. We are not appealing to them or asking them to examine or judge us. We deal with the British Government and it is for them to deal with that Government. Of course any M.P.s or others, who may care to come to India, may do so and we shall gladly meet them if they come.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Bhulabhai and another to Maulana.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

Shri Rajendra Prasad
Congress President
Ramgarh.

31. *From Jawaharlal Nehru*

Allahabad

DR RAJENDRA PD

RAMGARH C C

AT MAULANAS REQUEST AM CANCELLING MOTOR TOUR REACHING RAMGARH
FIFTEENTH MORNING TRAIN

JAWAHARLAL

32. *To Jawaharlal Nehru*

February 22, 1940

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

ALLAHABAD

CONGRESS CONSTITUTION CONTEMPLATES SIMULTANEOUS MEETINGS ALL
PROVINCES TO EFFECT PRESIDENT STOP CHANGING DATE IN ONE PROVINCE MAY
CREATE COMPLICATIONS AND IN PRESENT CONDITIONS MAY LEAD TO
QUESTIONING ENTIRE ELECTIONS

RAJENDRA PRASAD

33. *From Jawaharlal Nehru*

Anand Bhawan

Allahabad

February 22, 1940

My dear Rajendra Babu,

Your letter of 21st Feb. of Nariman's speech. I have no recollection of Nariman mentioning to me anything about this matter. I cannot be certain whether he casually referred to it or not. I remember, however, that there was some kind of a complaint about a Treasurer, probably the B.P.C.C. in Bombay. Bhulabhai, I think, enquired into it and found that there was only some technical error which was corrected and certain funds were paid in.

Later there was a lot of trouble in connection with the Girgaum D.C.C. elections. This was primarily not financial, though possibly some financial complaints were also made. At Babu's request I went rather hurriedly into the matter and wrote a long note. The note is in the A.I.C.C. office and Kripalani will be sending it to you together with Patil's reply.

Some months back when I was in Bombay, Perinben and others drew my attention to certain cases of misappropriation by an office-bearer of the Girgaum D.C.C. Prima facie it seemed to me that it was a case for inquiry and I believe I mentioned the matter to you also. I asked Perinben to see about this. What happened afterwards, I do not know. But from your letter it appears that a complaint was filed in a criminal court.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Shri Rajendra Prasad
Congress President
Ramgarh

34. To Jawaharlal Nehru

February 27, 1940

PANDIT JAWAHARLAL NEHRU
PI FASE WIRE TRAIN TIME ARRIVAL

RAJENDRA PRASAD

35. From Jawaharlal Nehru

Allahabad
February 27, 1940

RAJENDRA PRASAD
SADAQUAT ASHRAM
PATNA
REACHING BY EXPRESS TOMORROW MORNING FIVE

JAWAHARLAL

36. To Jawaharlal Nehru

February 27, 1940

My dear Jawaharlalji,

I have received your telegram today. I have not heard anything from Maulana Sahib yet. I do not know if he has sent the invitation already or not. I am telephoning to him now intimating your opinion.

It will be after a very long time that the members of the Working Committee will be visiting Patna. The people there are therefore naturally anxious that they should have the advantage of hearing the leaders. I have agreed and have

Dr. Rajendra Prasad:

arranged two meetings which I want you and some other of our friends to address. One meeting is fixed for the 29th at Patna City and the other will be held on some other day in Bankipore town. The meetings will be held in the evening so as not to interfere with the Working Committee meetings. I hope you will agree to this arrangement although I have given my consent without any previous consultation with you.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

37. *From Abul Kalam Azad*

Howrah
27th February 1940

BABU RAJENDRA PRASAD
PATNA

MAIL MISSED NOW STARTING DELHI EXPRESS WITH GANDHIJI

ABUL KALAM AZAD

38. *From Jawaharlal Nehru*

Anand Bhawan
Allahabad
March 2, 1940

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I have decided to spend a day or two motoring in Chhotanagpur, just before reaching Ramgarh. I propose to reach Patna on the 13th morning by train. Ranjit and Vijayalakshmi will accompany me. Mahmud is arranging for a car and we shall all go together, probably via Gaya and Hazaribagh to Ranchi. We shall spend the night at Ranchi and next day visit Chaibasa and come back to Ranchi. We shall reach Ramgarh either on the 14th evening or the 15th morning from Ranchi.

This is a provisional programme which I am suggesting to Mahmud. I am merely informing you about it, but you need not trouble yourself at all in regard to it. This is not a political tour, but just to relax ourselves before the Congress session.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

Babu Rajendra Prasad
Sadaquat Ashram
Dighaghat, Patna.

39. *From Jawaharlal Nehru*

Anand Bhawan
Allahabad
March 11, 1940

My dear Rajendra Babu,

There are some Burmese people who will be attending the Ramgarh Congress. I shall particularly like them to be treated as guests of the Reception Committee during their stay there. In view of the strained relations between the Burmese and the Indians, and the want of proper contacts, this visit of some Burmese should be welcomed.

Among those who are coming is a noted Burmese educationist, U B. Lwin, who used to be the Deputy President of the Senate there. Then there are some young men belonging to what is called the Dobama or Thakin group. This is a progressive group calling itself vaguely socialist but essentially nationalistic. In the welter of parties in Burma, they are the only people who have something other than a personal programme. In regard to the Indian question, their attitude has not been wholly sound but it has been better than that of other people. They are not well off. I hope, therefore, that it will be possible for the Reception Committee to treat them as its guests and to give them free tickets for the Congress and the Subjects Committee.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

Dr. Rajendra Prasad
Ramgarh
District Hazaribagh.

40. *From Jawaharlal Nehru*

Anand Bhawan
Allahabad
March 11, 1940

My dear Rajendra Babu,

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad insists on my staying in Allahabad till the 14th night to supervise the translation of his Presidential Address. His address has not even reached us as a whole yet. Much of it will come tomorrow. I am no good at translation but it is impossible to say no to the Maulana. And so, much to my regret, I must give up the motor travel I have planned via Nalanda, Gaya, and other places. I shall now start on the 14th night by the Bombay-Calcutta Mail, changing at Gomoh. My sister and Ranjit Pandit will accompany me, also perhaps one or two others.

I have written to the Reception Committee to reserve a hut in the family quarters for me, apart from the other hut which they have kept for me. There are a number of friends whom I have invited to stay with me. I shall of course pay for this hut.

Thank you for the letter you sent me, giving particulars of various routes.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

Dr. Rajendra Prasad
Ramgarh
District Hazaribagh.

41. *From Jawaharlal Nehru*

Wardha
16 May 1940

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I came here today to see Bapu. Ever since the last meeting of the Working Committee, I have been in Bombay engaged in the Planning Committee meetings. These ended, or rather were adjourned, on the 14th and I have come here for a day to meet Bapu. I am going tomorrow to Lucknow for our P.C.C. meeting and from there to Allahabad. I intend going to the Frontier Province later. I understood from Maulana Azad that he intends having the next meeting of the Working Committee on the 15th June.

Bapu showed me your letter to him together with a copy of your letter to Maulana dated 14th May. I had seen previously your brief statement in the Press. Curiously enough that very day a statement from me appeared also. I had no particular intention of saying anything then but I was surrounded by insistent Pressmen and I capitulated and dictated a statement. I do not know if you saw this in full. I am enclosing a copy.

The new developments in the war situation are surprising and disconcerting in some ways, and yet they did not surprise me overmuch. Ever since the war began, and even earlier, I had given much thought to this matter and all these possibilities were before me. I have been convinced for a long time that the disruption of the British Empire must take place soon, and it is with this background that I have considered our problems. Hence all the talk of Dominion Status and the like seemed singularly unreal to me.

For some months past I had a personal reason to try to anticipate events in Europe. My daughter is in Switzerland and I was concerned about her future programme. Long before the invasion of Holland, Belgium, etc., I wrote to her and to her doctors putting these possibilities as well as others to them. After full consideration we decided that she should remain where she was, even if

Switzerland became involved in the war.

I mention all this simply to indicate that the new development did not shock me or upset me. I was prepared for them. My mind had reasoned out the consequence and it was clear to me what our attitude should be. Subsequent events have justified abundantly the line we took up at the beginning of the war. That line must be continued without the least change. That line was dictated not by the war situation but by what transpired between us and the British Government. Therefore the war in Europe made no essential or direct difference. Indirectly it might affect the attitude of the British Government but that was their concern, not ours. Our attitude and line of action must inevitably remain unchanged so long as no effective change took place on the other side.

What has surprised me more than the invasion of Holland etc. has been the quite singular obtuseness of the British. Not even the Nasmyth hammer of war and disaster has made any dent on their imperialist outlook or their attitude to India. The last debate in the British Parliament demonstrated that even the Labour members shared this outlook completely. I do not see how we can have any dealings with people who continue to think and treat us in this way.

To say that Nazim is worse than the present form of British imperialism is true in some respects, though I doubt if there is fundamentally much difference. But to say that because Nazim is worse therefore we must prefer the domination of the British is surely a dangerous doctrine. It means that we are a helpless people who must have a master and the little choice we have is to choose masters. To say this is to put an end to all our pretensions and to admit the fundamental basis of British rule. I think we can never do this, whatever the consequences. We stand for independence and we shall resist any and every foreign authority which seeks to dominate over us. If we fail, it is better that we perish than willingly put on a yoke which we think might be a lighter one than another.

But I do not think there is the slightest chance of a German or Japanese invasion of India. Hitler may win this war. This grows more likely. But Hitler will not dominate the world. He will fall as Napoleon fell. The real possibility of trouble in India is not from external invasion but from internal adventurism and conflict. That possibility has to be faced and we cannot seek the help of British imperialism to overcome it. Indeed British imperialism will hardly be in a position to help effectively. The only thing we can do is to add to our strength, insofar as we can do so, and to keep a nucleus going round which various elements can gather in time of need. The only possible nucleus is the Congress, and apparently the most effective way of gaining strength is to continue to prepare for satyagraha. That satyagraha is not immediately indicated even if we were ready for it. I think it would be wrong at this particular moment when Britain is in peril for us to take advantage of her distress and rush at her throat. That would be wrong from the larger as well as the satyagrahi point of view; it would also be wrong tactics. But we want the discipline and training of satyagraha to meet other perils also.

Any other course is full of dangers for us, apart from the great injury to our

self-respect and dignity. Indeed such other course is likely to lead to that very internal commotion which we wish to avoid or provide against. The Congress would then lose the moral prestige it possesses and cease to be the nucleus round which the nation might gather. That other course might even facilitate external attack. In any event, whatever we may do will not make much difference from the military point of view. Modern warfare demands very special mechanised training and we cannot produce this, in large enough numbers, within a short time.

I am convinced that the British Empire has had its day. It will go to pieces and not all the king's horses and all the king's men will be able to put it together again. We surely are not going to indulge in the vain attempt to join together these pieces. If the British people are still imperialistic enough and proud enough to think of holding on to that Empire, they deserve failure and no one can save them.

In any event I am quite clear that we cannot change our line of action in the least. Indeed we must resist the slightest variation of it and hold firmly to the recognition of Indian independence and the full and unfettered right of our people to frame our Constitution through a Constituent Assembly. Every suggestion that a small body of men should do this must be rejected. Nor am I prepared to take any promises for the future. I do not understand why vital changes in India should wait till the war is over. The preparation for giving effect to them may take a little time but that has nothing to do with the ending of the war.

I would further add that even if all this is agreed to, it does not follow that we throw our manpower into the war. That will depend upon us, and our decision will no doubt be governed by the conditions then prevailing.

I do not myself like a negative attitude. I wish ours was more positive. Yet just at present I think a negative attitude has certain advantages—the positive side of course is preparation for satyagraha. I am glad that the Working Committee is not meeting for another four weeks. This period will help us to understand the situation better.

One other matter I might draw your attention to: so far as our newspapers are concerned, we get very one-sided and partial news. The radio helps in giving other viewpoints.

I do not know if I have succeeded in explaining my viewpoint. I am writing rather late at night and I have been feeling a little sleepy.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Maulana and giving another copy to Bapu.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

42. *To Chakradhar Sharan*¹

Pilani
17 May 1940

My dear Chakradhar,
Blessings!

I am worried to hear that you were held up in Delhi owing to indisposition. Today I have come to know that you have jaundice. I am all the more worried for that. How was it that you got an attack of jaundice so suddenly? You looked quite all right there. Did you have attacks of fever or malaria previously? What does the physicians say? Please write or get written to me all about it.

Since you left, there has been a lot of rains here and till day before yesterday, there was an abundance of clouds and rains. Humidity was sometimes over 90% and it continued all along almost over 80%. For that reason I had a fresh attack of asthma. Since yesterday the sky has been clearing. I hope now I will recover soon. Your notebook was left somewhere in the train. It has somehow come with me! It is being returned herewith.

Rajendra Prasad

¹Private Secretary to Dr. Rajendra Prasad. Dr. Rajendra Prasad's letters to Chakradhar Sharan were originally written in Hindi.

43. *To Chakradhar Sharan*

Sikar
22 June 1940

My dear Chakradhar,

Received your letter. I am glad to know that you are now keeping well. After a protracted illness, weakness is natural. Once the disease is cured weakness is bound to go. There is no reason to worry. I would also like you to go out somewhere for a change of climate for some days. I had a mind to call you here; but when I remembered that you were having occasional attacks of fever and that you are still under the treatment of Sakham Babu, I gave up the idea as I did not think it right on your part to undertake such a long journey. Better will it be for you to go to Chunar or Deoghar. At Deoghar Binoda Babu will get all arrangements made for you, and Ambika has also been improving there. Perhaps you don't know that there may be someone like Binoda Babu in Chunar too, who can make similar arrangements. Chhabinathji also has not been residing there. However, decide for whichever is possible. For the expenses I will anyhow make arrangements. I would like to be there by 3rd or 4th November. I feel like going to

Allahabad from here and taking part in the Jayanti Celebration of Kaliprasad Kulbhaskar there on 2 November; and thereafter I would straightway go to Zeradei and after 3/4 days to Patna. But that is not settled as yet. Maybe I would go to Patna first and then to Zeradci. Most probably you will also have information about that before 4th or 5th November.

Yesterday there was a telegram from Prof. Abdul Bari in which he had informed that he had something to discuss with me and wanted to know if I would be reaching by 4th November. I could not get his address and so sent a telegram to you. Inform him that I will be reaching Bihar by 4th November. I want to start from here on 3rd or 4th November. Rest is fine.

Rajendra Prasad

P.S. Shri Vidya Bhusan Shukla and Ayyum Hassan are here for the past three four days. They have come to take my opinion regarding publishing the deposition of the Labour Committee. I will give my opinion after I have seen the deposition.

Rajendra Prasad

44. *To Chakradhar Sharan*

Zeradei

19 July 1940

My dear Chakradhar,

I will reach there on 21 July Sunday, by the morning 10 o'clock steamer from here. Urmila and her mother will also accompany me. So send both the cars to the station, but if it is not possible, don't worry.

Professor K.T. Shah will arrive there tomorrow. Please make arrangements for his stay. Let somebody go to the station to receive him. There should not be any inconvenience to him. I will have talks with him after reaching there on 21 July. He should be informed accordingly.

Rajendra Prasad

45. *From Jawaharlal Nehru*

Allahabad

August 5, 1940

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I enclose a note I have received from Raja Jwala Prasad on the present condition of the sugar industry.

The subject is a complicated one and the fact that we cannot influence the Government directly makes it still more difficult for us to deal with it. It is likely that the Provincial Governments will have some decisions soon.

Briefly put, my own views are:

1. Only by planning carefully on an all-India basis can the present crisis be got over satisfactorily. This means planning of cane production, sugar production, sales, etc.

2. The sugar industry has made enormous profits in the past and therefore it should bear the burden to a large extent of a bad period which is partly due to its own improvidence in not building up reserve funds and partly to the huge profits that were taken out. I realise that much of these profits were reinvested in fresh plants. That was a very risky thing to do. It is unfair under the circumstances for the industrialists to want to cast the burden on the consumers or the cane-growers.

3. At the same time it is obvious that a big crisis may break up the industry completely and this must be avoided.

4. All-India planning necessarily requires not only some general all-India rules but also state control in cooperation with representatives of the industry and the cane-growers. Absence of state control means cut-throat competition, chaos and disorder. Such state control, it is true, under present conditions will be exercised by a state which is irresponsible. But any rules that we may lay down will necessarily have to ignore this fact.

5. If all-India rules or planning is out of the question, there should at least be joint planning in the U.P. and Bihar as hitherto. Unfortunately this did not go far enough and even the rules that were laid down were not observed. There have been serious complaints of individual industrialists not abiding by the rules and thereby making illegitimate profits.

6. There is bound to be considerable over-production of sugar during the next season and there is already a large stock, estimated at four hundred thousand tons, which is three times the normal carry-over. To stop cane-crushing by factories during the current season to any large extent would be disastrous for the cane-grower. I think that the factories will have to be encouraged to continue crushing almost as before. It may, however, be possible to reduce somewhat this crushing and encourage the peasants to turn some of their sugarcane into gur. I understand that this can only be done satisfactorily in the early part of the season, otherwise the cane is not good enough for the purpose. Therefore a clear decision must be arrived at by experts as to the quantity that should be allotted to gur production. This should be evenly distributed so as not to cause undue loss to particular individuals. I do not, however, expect the greater part of over-production to be converted into gur. Only some part of it will go that way. The rest must be consumed by the factories.

7. The price paid for sugarcane during the last season rose unduly, chiefly because of the desire of the factory owners to get high prices for sugar. The sliding scale resulted in the cane price going up also. I suppose both the price of sugar and the cane price will have to be reduced. But neither should be reduced unduly,

especially the latter. What the exact figures are likely to be, I cannot say. That is a matter for expert computation.

8. A similar problem had to be faced by President Roosevelt's administration in America in regard to over-production of certain commodities. The New Deal provided for this. It was not considered desirable to reduce prices and it was found that at this price level if 70 per cent or 80 per cent or thereabouts of the commodities were sold, this brought a sufficient return to the factory owners and, at any rate, prevented loss. The balance of over-production was taken over for free distribution by ration cards among people who were too poor to buy. This distribution did not affect the buying public which continued to be the same. At the same time it gave a much needed article to those who could not afford it. I was recently discussing this matter with Ambalal Sarabhai and he strongly advocated this New Deal for the sugar industry in India.

9. Ambalal alternatively suggested that the Government should make themselves responsible for the industry at least during this coming season and should see to it that the factory owners just get their running expenses and nothing more. If this was done there was every chance of the all-India excise duty being removed.

10. Under any circumstances it seems desirable not to apply this all-India excise duty during this season at least.

11. I do not know what the commitments are about the Indian export of sugar. I understand that the Government of India have agreed that no Indian sugar should be exported. Why this should be so, I do not know, nor do I know what India got in exchange for this. I do not see why India should not export when and where it can.

I would suggest to you to consult, especially among the industrialists, Brij Mohan Birla, Lala Shriram of Delhi, and Ambalal Sarabhai. Each of these has a separate viewpoint, to some extent in conflict with the others. Of course representatives of the cane-growers must be consulted and Katju and Mahmud who have dealt with this matter and are intimately acquainted with it.

I have just seen a Press report about the new decision of the U.P. and Bihar Governments.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Enclosure not included

46. To Chakradhar Sharan

Wardha
16 August 1940

My dear Chakradhar,

I am all right. Only weakness is persisting. Hope it will also go away very soon.

The day before yesterday I wrote to you a letter which you must have received. Write to me the amount of money lying in my bank account so that I may draw some money by cheque there for expenses.

Hope you are all right. In my opinion, you should surely get your blood tested. It does not cause any pain in particular. As for me I get the blood-test done, often twice or thrice, during every ailment. It causes no pain and you get to know of the inside. For such a long time you have been having fever frequently. You must find out the reason. A blood-test will surely reveal the reason. Do not be lethargic about this.

Hope Ambika is well. Write about him also.

Rest is fine.

Rajendra Prasad

47. *To Chakradhar Sharan*

Sikar (Rajasthan)

9 September 1940

My dear Chakradhar,

Blessings!

Received your letter. I am glad to know that you are getting well. I too am well. Now my worries are about Ambika. Hope he has also recovered to some extent.

Yesterday I received letters you sent from Darbhanga. I do not want them. There is one letter dated ... May 1940. It has its reply along with it. The date of reply is 15.5.40. It will be somewhere amongst the papers of this year. If you find it, send by return post.

There was in our papers the findings of the Hindu-Muslim riot in the district of Muzaffarpur, about which I wrote a letter to you and Shah Saheb. That has not yet reached Mahatmaji. Search for it and send it soon right there and inform me accordingly. The rest here is all right.

Rajendra Prasad

Shri Chakradhar Sharan
Sadaquat Ashram
Dighaghat, Patna.

48. *From Binodanand Jha*

Baidyanath-Deoghar (S.P.)

23rd September 1940

Dear Sir,

I am in receipt of Malhotra Babu's letter dated 18.9.40 with enclosures. Copies

of my letter to Maulana Saheb and Chairman, District Board, are enclosed for your information.

Trust you are doing well.

Yours sincerely,
Binodanand Jha

P.S. I am laid down with fever since yesterday.

Dr. Rajendra Prasad
New Hotel
P.O. Jaipur.

Enclosure 1:

(Copy of letter from Binodanand Jha to Abul Kalam Azad)

Baidyanath-Deoghar (S.P.)
September 23, 1940

Dear Sir,

I have received, on 21-9-40, a representation from the Mistress of the Sumana Girls L.P. School (Bhagalpur) along with your forwarding letter to Dr. Rajendra Prasad and I am addressing the Chairman, District Board, for necessary action and report at an early date.

Yours sincerely,
Binodanand Jha
Convener
Congress Sub-Committee
for Control of Local Bodies

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad
A.I.C.C. Office
Allahabad.

Enclosure 2:

(Copy of letter from Binodanand Jha to Jogendra Babu)

Baidyanath-Deoghar (S.P.)
September 23, 1940

My dear Jogendra Babu,

1. I enclose herewith a representation from the Mistress of the Sumana Girls

L.P. School with forwarding letters (in original)* from Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Dr. Rajendra Prasad.

2. Though I cannot read Urdu, I believe the petition to be from or on behalf of Bibi Ghafura Khatoon against her supersession by Bibi Masuda Khatoon. You would recollect that petition from the same quarter was filed before you. During my last visit to Bhagalpur, I forwarded to you another petition by Bibi Ghafura Khatoon and you told me that necessary steps were being taken to bring about a settlement that would be satisfactory to both.

3. I hope a settlement might have been brought about by now and if so it may be communicated to me for being forwarded to Dr. Rajendra Prasad. If unfortunately no settlement can be brought about I would request you to send me a report on the allegations with your and Basir Saheb's opinion on the same. Needless to add that the petition should be sympathetically considered and any grievance of the petitioner fairly dealt with for remedy.

Anticipating an early reply,

Yours sincerely,
Binodanand Jha

*Not included.

49. *To Chakradhar Sharan*

Sikar
4 October 1940

My dear Chakradhar,

Dr. Baburamji Saksena from Hindi Sahitya Sammelan had sent me my printed report on Kashmir Education Committee. That must be there somewhere. Please find it and send it to him at the address given below. Before sending back the report please make a copy of those two/three pages wherein instruction through Urdu and Kashmiri has been dealt with and they have recommended instruction only through Urdu, and send these to me. So far as I remember, Dr. Baburam has marked those pages. Send back the report soon.

The police here yesterday visited Sethiji for interrogation in connection with a statement of his regarding Jaipur. I am afraid they may institute a case against him and he may also be arrested. He wishes that I should stay on here till the end of the month. I am also thinking that in that period I will gain strength and vitality to brave the winter. Rest is fine.

Rajendra Prasad

Baburam Saksena, M.A.
24, Chhattam Lane
Allahabad.

50. To Chakradhar Sharan

Sikar

8 October 1940

My dear Chakradhar,

The other day I wrote to you a letter. Therein I had also written to Shah Saheb in Urdu asking him to send to Mahatmaji the findings of the Hindu-Muslim riot at Muzaffarpur. Yesterday too I received a letter from Bapu. He has sent for the findings of Majhoulia. There is one copy amongst my papers, along with the letter of Mahesh Babu. Together with Mahesh Babu's letter send that immediately to Mahatmaji if you have not already done the same. The Assembly Reports may be available there at some place or other. If there was any question-answer or debate on Muzaffarpur, send also that. There has been too much delay in this matter. There should not be any further delay. All is well. Reply as to whether the findings have been sent or not. Now Shah Saheb should not have any difficulty regarding the copy of Majhoulia.

Rajendra Prasad

51. To Chakradhar Sharan

Sikar

12 October 1940

My dear Chakradhar,

Received all your letters. The copy of the Darbhanga letter has also reached.

I had been to Banasthali for a few days. This place is about 45 miles from Jaipur. It is absolutely in a rural environment. There Shri Hiralalji Shastri, his wife Ratan Devi Shastri and some others are running a girls' school. About 140/145 girls are studying there and some of them have come from places out of Rajasthan. It was the annual ceremony of this school. I have been thinking of going there for some years past and so this time I went there. A very good work for the education of girls is being done there. Ratan Devi conducts herself as a mother to all the girls. Speciality lies in the fact that not only studies but physical exercise is also conducted there. Instruction is being imparted in wielding sticks, knives and the like besides mallet, and in fencing as well. They do a lot of horse-riding. They have learnt how to swim well and are learning archery. Like in a circus they can ride the bicycle. They get intensive training in handicrafts, what to speak of spinning the wheel or cleansing cotton with a carding bow. Needle work, embroidery, knitting, etc. are all taught. At the same time training is very well imparted in painting and music. The girls receive adequate competence in almost all subjects. They are taught up to the Matric level and one can sit for the

examination if one so desires. That apart, even in respect of domestic chores the girls are taught how to prepare flour with the grinding stone, clean clothes and cook. They themselves prepare their soaps. They receive all kinds of training. Never have I so far seen any institution where instruction is imparted in so many fields at a time. The expenses I find are also quite low.

Archery is taught. I saw one hit the hanging thread, a couple of girls riding the same horse and then jumping from one horse on to another. Acrobatics on the cycle were wonderful. One after another twelve girls rode on one cycle and again got down one by one on the run. There was an exhibition of the articles they had produced. The pictures were nicely drawn and from the exhibits of drawings of different countries prepared by the girls, one could even have a glimpse into plans for Pakistan. The girls delivered discourses on delightful topics like violence and non-violence, etc. The girls were aged from 6/7 to 16/17. Everyone, even the youngest of the young, has to learn and do a lot of things. On the side of domestic work the little girls have only to separate worms etc. from wheat. In the kitchen they render help by assisting in peeling vegetables, kneading flour and drawing water. All sorts of food are prepared. Bread, pulses, rice and different varieties of vegetarian curries, halwa, pudi, paratha, peda, nismi, shakarpala and several such sweets and chutney etc.—all these they learn to prepare. The girls receive instruction in the maintenance of kitchen-stores as well. Having seen all these I felt like bringing Usha and Urmila also to this institution. I will consult after reaching there. Let me see what their mother says. And what else would she have said if they had visited this place!

Please preserve this letter. It has to be discussed with Mrityunjay Babu and Dhannu Babu and their opinions are to be sought.

Rajendra Prasad

52. *To Chakradhar Sharan*

Sikar

17 October 1940

My dear Chakradhar,

Received your letter. All the previous letters had reached here and the Darbhanga letter has also been received. Your letter and mine have crossed in transit. So you might have thought that the earlier letters had not reached. However, here is to hand a pair of copies of our Darbhanga letter. But that does not matter.

I had returned from Banasthali and just for a day gone to Pilani, the home of the Birlas. There they have established a college and have been carrying on several undertakings. They spend quite a lot of amount in lakhs every year on that account. They desired that I should pay a visit and so I had been there. On my way back I broke my journey for a day at Mukandgarh where Bhagirath

Kanodiaji has his home and where he has at his own expense opened a middle school and several primary schools. There has not been any particular change because of this short journey. Nevertheless, I intend to continue my stay here. While returning I will visit one or two places.

The rest is fine.

Rajendra Prasad

53. To Chakradhar Sharan

22 October 1940

My dear Chakradhar,

I am enclosing herewith a letter for Awadheshwar. I do not know whether he is there, nor do I know his address. Please send this to him as soon as possible by ascertaining his address. The letter is urgent.

I will start from here on 31/10 at 6 in the morning. I will halt at Jaipur for a few hours and resume journey from there by the night train, and reach Allahabad on 1/11 at 6 in the evening. There I will possibly stay with Mr. Shankar Sharan, Barrister, at 6 Admonster Road. I would like to start on the same day by the evening or night train. But I may have to postpone if I am held back by them. Right now I have not decided whether I should go from there first to Zeradei and then from Zeradei to Patna or I should first go to Patna and then to Zeradei. Whatever may that be, it will be decided at Allahabad. I will wire from there. Arrange for the mail accordingly. Send the mail so that it may reach Allahabad by 2/11. Now you may very well stop the mail for here. I will also send a telegram today so that it is stopped.

More when we meet.

Rajendra Prasad

54. To Chakradhar Sharan

Prayag

3 November 1940

My dear Chakradhar,

I am leaving for Wardha in order to attend the Working Committee meeting. It appears to be urgent and so I feel it imperative to go. I hear that Mahatmaji is thinking of going on fast. This can only be ascertained when I go there. And for this particularly I will have to go. But don't let it out right now.

I am sending my excess luggage. I will be leaving for Wardha tomorrow, 4 November, in the morning. If at all I get time I will make an attempt to start on

6th and reach positively on 9 November by any train. A Conference on Sugar has been convened at Patna on 10 November. I must be there for that. Among the letters reaching there some will be in connection with this Sugar Conference. Go through all the letters there, and if at all you feel it necessary to ask for my opinion about those letters, particularly those relating to Sugar Conference, please get it from me by telegram or telephone. I will reach Wardha by 12 noon on 5.11.1950 and thereafter you may contact me over the telephone whenever necessary. In all the letters I have written in connection with the Sugar Conference, I have asked for opinion of people and requested the Presidents of the Sugar Syndicate and Sugar Millowners' Association to be personally present or to send their representatives. Likewise, I have invited the farmers also. If there is any intimation for the change of date of the Conference, please let me know positively. Keep all other letters there which contain opinions only. No necessity is there to phone me about them. In this matter have a talk with Anugrah Babu and decide accordingly. If there is any enquiry contact by telephone or telegram.

Rajendra Prasad

P.S. I am not writing separately to Anugrah Babu or Mrityunjay. Convey my words to them. Have consultation with Anugrah Babu and fix a place where about 10 or 12 persons can comfortably sit and talk. There I intend to hold the Conference.

Rajendra Prasad

55. *To Chakradhar Sharan*

Wardha
6 November 1940

My dear Chakradhar,
Blessings!

We arrived yesterday. Intention is that I will start from here on Friday morning and reach Patna in the evening on Saturday by Delhi Express. I will inform you in case of any change of programme.

Janardan Babu's mother is in Bombay. I am going to send Sitaram to bring her back. I shall be able to meet them at Itarsi station and together we will go up to Allahabad. From Allahabad I will send her to Zeradei with Sitaram, and myself and Mathura Babu will reach Patna on Saturday, 9 November, by 6.30 in the evening. If at all there is any change I will let you know by telegram or letter.

Please fix the venue etc. there with regard to the Sugar Conference. It is to be held there on 10 November. Please keep everything arranged before my arrival.

Rajendra Prasad

*56. From J.B. Kripalani**Allahabad**December 5, 1940*

RAJENDRA PRASAD
CONGRESS
PATNA

DOCTOR TAICHITAO AND PARTY ARRIVING MAHENDRAGHAT TEN THIRTY
LEAVING ELEVEN FOR GAYA ATTEND STATION IF POSSIBLE

KRIPALANI

57. From Dr. Sachchidananda Sinha

Sinha Library Road
Patna
20th December 1940

My dear Rajendra,

I have just received your kind and affectionate letter of yesterday's date, and have noted its contents. Your letter is a great surprise to me, for I know absolutely nothing about the matter you have mentioned in it. There was no such talk in my presence between the Maulana Saheb and anyone else. I regret, therefore, I am not in a position to give you any information about it.

I was to have gone to Calcutta this evening. But as the weather here is very foul today, Dr. Banerjee advises me not to start today. But I shall, very probably, be going to Calcutta tomorrow evening, and staying there, for some days, at the Calcutta Club. I hope to meet there, soon after my arrival, the Maulana Saheb. I shall then talk over matters with him and let you know what he says.

Lastly, I am highly gratified to learn that you are better. I pray that you may continue to do so. Wishing you a very happy new year.

I remain,
With my blessings and good wishes,
Ever yours affectionately,
S. Sinha

58. From Abul Kalam Azad

ALL INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE

Swaraj Bhawan
Allahabad
December 25, 1940

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I have received today your letter of 21st December, and I have received another

letter also before it. The matters referred to in your last letter are themselves under my consideration for some time past, specially the matter of local bodies. *The Secretary of Purulia Congress Committee* had also come here with these questions, a few days ago. Undoubtedly it is necessary to have it clearly decided, having all the pros and cons of the problem in view. So far as other Provinces are concerned, they are including all such Congressmen in the lists sent to Mahatmaji, who are in the local bodies. And they see the problem in the light of the fact that when we are in the thick of the struggle all other things are of secondary importance, and we should leave them to look after themselves.

However, the decision of all such matters lies with Mahatmaji. You did well in referring the matter to him. I am leaving for Lahore today, from where I shall go to Wardha. I shall fully discuss the matter with Mahatmaji, and let you know the result.

The matter mentioned in your previous letter needs a detailed discussion. I shall try to write to you in detail during my journey as soon as I get leisure to do so.

You have written nothing about your health. I hope you are quite well by now.

Yours sincerely,
A.K. Azad

59. *From J.B. Kripalani*

ALL INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE

January 13, 1941

My dear Rajendrababu,

I had your letter today. Though I have not written to you I have been enquiring from friends about your health. I am glad to know that you are progressing and the change of season will bring you normal health.

I am leaving for Wardha this evening. If I had your letter a couple of days earlier it would not have been necessary for you to send a separate messenger to Wardha. I am overdue there, my office having already preceded me.

Just after I got your letter I saw Maulana Saheb. I had to see him before I left for Wardha. I told him about what you had written. As soon as I mentioned Shri Baldev Sahai he flared up. He said that Baldev Sahai had enjoyed a salary of Rs. 2,000 p.m. for a year and a half without anybody knowing it, though the change in the office was urged on the ground that the new incumbent would be drawing Rs.500 only per month. He said that it was not enough that the resignation be rejected and that he had not used the words which are imputed to him. He said that all he had said to you was that you could do no more, not that Shri Baldev Sahai could do no more. He even said that if Shri Baldev Sahai wanted to

rehabilitate himself the best thing for him would be to resign. I told him that this was not insisted upon in other Provinces. I gave him the instance of U.P. But he did not think that the two cases were similar. Under these circumstances, I do not know what would be best for you to do. I shall show your letters to Babu and also tell him what Maulana Saheb mentioned to me. I shall write to you from Wardha Babu's opinion if he expresses any.

I hope the work there is progressing well and smoothly.

With pranams,

Yours sincerely,
Kripalani

Babu Rajendra Prasad
Sadaquat Ashram
Dighaghat, Patna.

60. *From J.B. Kripalani*

Sevagram
Wardha
January 15, 1941

My dear Rajendrababu,

As I wrote to you from Allahabad I came here last evening. I met Babu at noon. Among other things I referred to him the matter of the Bengal Congress Legislature Party. Maulana Sahib had asked me to write to Shri Kiran Shanker Roy and inquire about the names of such members of the Bengal Legislature who had not answered his (Maulana's) letter and expressed regret for participating in the meeting where Shri Sarat Bose was elected as the Leader of the Congress Party. When I got the names I was to announce that under instructions from the Maulana Sahib disciplinary action was taken against them and they were debarred from being members of the Bengal Congress Legislature Party. You perhaps know that Maulana Sahib has already taken action against 14 legislators who refused to express regret for participating in the election of Shri Sarat Bose. Some others don't seem to have replied to Maulana's letters. The names of the latter were to be inquired by me from Shri Kiran Shanker Roy and necessary action announced.

I have written to Shri Kiran Shanker Roy and asked for the names but I have told him to send the reply here so that if anything was to be done in the matter, it may be done in consultation with Babu. I had today this consultation. We both agree that this matter should be dropped at present and Shri Kiran Shanker Roy should be directed to ask all Congress legislators in Bengal to sign the satyagraha pledge and court arrest. Babu feels this ought to have been done earlier. But even now it should be done. It will bring Bengal in line with other Provinces where

satyagraha has been offered by Congress legislators. It will also show who are real Congress legislators and who are not. It will end the unfortunate controversy.

If you agree with our point of view, you as the remaining member of the Parliamentary Board may issue instructions accordingly. Instructions will have to be sent to Shri Kiran Shanker Roy as also announced in the Press.

I have not yet [had] an occasion to talk to Bapu about Shri Baldev Sahai's case. When I have opportunity next I shall talk to him.

With pranams,

Shri Rajendra Prasad
Zeradei, Bihar.

Yours ever,
J.B. Kripalani

61. *From Sadik Ali*

ALL INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE

January 20, 1941

Respected Rajendra Babu,

Your letter of the 19th January 1941. We have looked into the files but the correspondence referred to by you is not found in our files here. Perhaps the papers may be got from the files of the Parliamentary Sub-Committee office at Bombay.

With respects,

Yours sincerely,
Sadik Ali

Shri Rajendra Prasad
Bajajwadi
Wardha, C.P.

62. *From J.B. Kripalani*

ALL INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE

Camp: Sevagram
January 29, 1941

My dear Rajendra Babu,

We have received the following telegram from Dr. Pattabhi addressed to you:

DECIDED CONTESTING WIRED PRESS INVITING APPLICATION SUBMITTING

**YOU RECOMMENDATION 1ST PROXIMO IF PHONING STILL NECESSARY
PLEASE CALL YOURSELF**

I have written to Dr. Pattabhi that you have left Wardha and therefore he may address all communications to you at Zeradei.

The President of the Maharashtra P.C.C. was here the day after you left. They are resolved on contesting the two elections. They feel sure they will win by huge majorities in spite of the anti-Congress forces arrayed against them.

With respects,

Yours sincerely,
J.B. Kripalani

Dr. Rajendra Prasad
P.O. Zeradei
Dist. Saran.

63. *From Sadik Ali*

Wardhaganj
January 30, 1941

RAJENDRA PD
CONGRESS
PATNA

BAPU REACHING ALI AHABAD 27TH EVENING ALI AHABAD PASSENGER PLEASE
WIRE SWARAJ BHAVAN YOUR ARRIVAL

SADIK ALI

64. *From Deogirikar*

Poona
- February 5, 1941

RAJENDRA PRASAD
ZERADEI
SARAN

RAJMAL LAKHICHAND AND DADASAHEB JEDHE FIXED ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS
WIRE CONSENT

DEOGIRIKAR

65. *From Kala Venkatarao*

Bezwada
February 5, 1941

BABU RAJENDRA PRASAD
PATNA

ANDHRA COMMITTEE SELECTED ADDEPAILLY SATYANARAYANA CONGRESS
CANDIDATE VICE TIRUMALARAO NOMINATIONS TOMORROW WIRE ELLORE
CARE CONGRESS KIND APPROVAL

KALA VENKATARAO
GENERAL SECRETARY

66. *From Kala Venkatarao*

Ellore
February 5, 1941

BABU RAJENDRA PRASAD
PAINA

CENTRAL ASSEMBLY CONGRESS NOMINATION UNOPPOSED

VENKATARAO

67. *From J.B. Kripalani*

ALL INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE

Sevagram
Via Wardha (C.P.)
February 5, 1941

My dear Rajendrababu,

I came here yesterday from Poona. The circular about the Municipalities and the Local Boards recently issued by the office has created certain doubts. Bapu says that it was drafted by you and, therefore, these doubts can be resolved by you only. He does not want me to issue any explanation without consulting you. I shall, therefore, wait till you are here to clear the points of doubt which have arisen in the minds of the Provincial Congress Committees. I am sending you herewith copy of letter received from the President, Utkal P.C.C., about the conduct of Pt. Nilakantha Das and Shri Chintamani Misra. Bapu would like you to advise us in this matter as you know the activities of these friends in the past. I

have written to them letters asking for facts.

I am also sending you a complaint received from Bihar against the Assistant Secretary of your Committee. I hope there will be no change in your programme. With regards,

Yours sincerely,
J.B. Kripalani

Enclosure 1:

(Copy of letter from Pranakrushna Parihari, Utkal P.C.C., to the General Secretary, A.I.C.C.)

January 30, 1941

Sri M.N. Roy came to Orissa on the 26th inst. on the invitation of Pandit Nilakantha Das and his colleagues. On 27-1-1941 a public meeting was convened at Cuttack by Sri Chintamani Misra (Member, A.I.C.C.) and some others. Sri M.N. Roy, the principal speaker, as well as Pandit Nilakantha Das who presided over the meeting, virulently attacked the Congress, Mahatmaji and the Satyagraha movement. They also did their usual propaganda for the formation of a coalition ministry. Mr. Roy exceeded all limits of decency and courtesy and used abusive language when some lawyers and students heckled him with questions.

I believe that by this anti-Congress propaganda the hands of the Congress is being strengthened, and the propagandists are quite unsuccessful in their attempts to win the people to their side. But it is regrettable that some of the persons responsible for such propaganda are still passing off as Congressmen. In particular, I bring to your notice the names of Pandit Nilakantha Das and Shri Chintamani Misra (the latter being a member of the A.I.C.C.).

Pandit Nilakantha Das was elected to the Central Legislature as an official Congress candidate. He recently resigned his membership in the Assembly Congress Party and joined the Nationalist Party and attended the Assembly session as a member of the latter Party. Since his return from the Assembly meeting he is touring in Ganjam district (taking advantage of the fact that his colleague Shri Dibakar Patnaik is the Chairman and President of the Ganjam District Board) carrying on his anti-Congress propaganda flying the Congress tri-coloured flag on his car.

Shri Chintamani Misra is unwilling either to offer Satyagraha or to resign his membership in the A.I.C.C. He is one of Panditji's colleagues in anti-Satyagraha propaganda and was convener of Roy's meeting. You might remember his name as he had made certain allegations against Shri Biswanath Das which were found to be false by Sjt. Rajendra Prasad.

I suggest that suitable disciplinary action be taken against them by depriving

them of four-anna membership for at least five years.

I request you to consult Bapuji and do the needful.

Pranakrushna Parihari
President, Provincial Congress Committee
(Utkal)

J.B. Kripalani
Sevagram.

Enclosure 2:

(Copy of letter from M.A. Rizvi to the General Secretary, A.I.C.C.)

P.O. Barh
Dist Patna
February 1, 1941

Dear Sir,

I have seen the statement issued by Gandhiji and the recent circular of the A.I.C.C. office to all the P.C.C.s clarifying certain questions arising out of the conduct of the present Satyagraha Movement. It is asserted therein that "If a Congressman occupying a representative position in Congress organisation does not offer himself for Satyagraha he should vacate his office and in terms of Gandhiji's instructions such vacancy shall not be filled." From this it is clear that Congressmen holding elective posts should either offer themselves for Satyagraha or vacate their seats and carry out the constructive programme of the Congress.

But it is wonderful and at the same time very regrettable to note that even in the face of such clear statement by Gandhiji and circular from your office some of the members holding elective posts in Congress organisation feel reluctant to part with power. Among those, the name of Moulvi Shah Ozair Muaimi, Asstt. Secretary, Bihar Provincial Congress Committee, deserves mention. The President being always absent from the provincial headquarters, he has his own way pretty much in all matters. He, having no sacrifice to his credit, has been the Asstt. Secretary of the B.P.C.C. and has been misappropriating a large sum (from Congress standpoint) of Rs.200 per month from the Congress fund, which is highly objectionable. The details are given below:

Rs 65—as honorarium per month

Rs.45—monthly salary of his three personal servants

Rs.25—monthly salary of his motor driver

Rs.65—monthly payment for the petrol and mobil oil for the car used by him for going to his residence at Phulwarisharif daily and coming back to Sadaquat Ashram.

Besides, he has no living faith in non-violence and is not a regular spinner.

As such I, being a nationalist, deem it my duty to bring this matter to your notice for immediate action so that the fair name of the Congress may not be tarnished.

Yours sincerely,
M.A. Rizvi

The General Secretary
All India Congress Committee
Camp: Sevagram, Wardha.

68. *From Banarsi Prasad Jhunjunwala*

Ramnagar
February 6, 1941

REPLY PD

RAJENDRA PDJI
SADAQUATASHRAM
PATNA

WIRE WHETHER I REACH EIGHTH OR NINTH

BANARSIPRASAD

69. *To Banarsi Prasad Jhunjunwala*

BANARSIPRASAD
RAMNAGAR
YOU MAY COME EIGHTH EVENING

RAJENDRAPRASAD

70. *To J.B. Kripalani*

Sadaquat Ashram
Patna
February 8, 1941

My dear Kripalaniji,

I am enclosing a copy of the letter I have received from Syt. Kiran Shanker Roy in reply to my letter which I wrote from Wardha. I think the position in Bengal is

such that it deserves consideration. But it is difficult to see what these people would be able to do in the Assembly session when they are themselves divided and the Government commands a large majority. If the Congress members absent themselves or resign, there is bound to be a great deal of propaganda against the Congress. Whether these members succeed in any effective opposition or not, their absence or resignation will give others an opportunity to run down the Congress. I am, therefore, inclined to leave them alone to do what they can in the Assembly. But it is not a matter in which I can give any offhand decision and would discuss with Bapu and you when I am there.

I am just at the present moment engaged with members of various District Boards in Bihar in discussing their respective problems and deciding from which they are to withdraw and which they should continue to run. I am also engaged in discussing with friends the sugarcane problem. I may therefore be detained by a few days. Please inform Bapu.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

Syt. J.B. Kripalani
Gen. Secretary
All India Congress Committee
Wardha.

Enclosure not included.

71. From Deogirikar

Poona
February 10, 1941

Dear Rajendra Babu,

I had sent a wire to you on the 5th February at Zeradei (Saran) but have not received reply till now. We have selected two candidates for Central Assembly. One is Syt. Rajmal Lakhichand of East Khandesh. He is our member in the Provincial Assembly. He is a staunch follower of Mahatma Gandhi and a best Congressman. Second candidate is Mr. S.M. Jedhe. He is brother of Syt. K.M. Jedhe who was a member of the Central Assembly and whose seat was cancelled. He is a newcomer in Congress. He was supporting Congress all along. He is a man of high character and of great influence. They have submitted their nomination papers on the 6th. The scrutiny of the papers is on the 14th February and the date of election is on 10th March. Will you be kind enough to give us a

week for touring in the seven districts? All our front-rank leaders are in jail and your tour will create marvellous effect. Kindly don't say no.

Yours sincerely,
Deogirikar
President
Maharashtra P.C.C.

72. *From J B. Kripalani*

Sevagram, Wardha
February 13, 1941

My dear Rajendrababu,

The Secretary, Assam Assembly Party, has sent me a letter regarding the members of his Party attending the next session of the Assembly. A copy of this letter has been sent to you by him. I am sending you herewith copies of the correspondence passed between him and me. I referred the new letter to Bapu. In spite of his previous instructions he says that the whole matter must be referred to you. You will please deal with it. Bapu's opinion so far as I can understand was that no useful purpose will be served by members attending the session. I don't see how this question of attendance can arise. We have declared that all Congress M.L.A.s should offer Satyagraha. We have not said that those in the minority Provinces should not offer Satyagraha. Only an exception was made in the case of Sind. Assam, having written that it would be humiliating for the remaining members to attend the next session, now wants a sort of permission to attend. The Secretary makes no mention whether the remaining members propose to offer Satyagraha or not. However, you will deal with the whole question.

Bapu showed me your latest letter to him in which you have written about the sugar situation in the Province. He thinks that instead of coming here after a few days it would be easier for you to meet him at Allahabad when he goes there for the opening ceremony of the Hospital. I had a programme for U.P. which I had postponed for your coming. Now that Bapu has suggested that you come to Allahabad I am proposing to leave in a couple of days for U.P. If you think it will serve any useful purpose for me to meet you, you will write to me at Allahabad. I suppose I will have time to come over to Patna and then can return in time for the opening ceremony on the 28th February. Bapu proposes to be at Allahabad for at least a couple of days.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,
J.B. Kripalani

Dr. Rajendra Prasad
P.O. Zeradei
Dist. Saran, Bihar.

Enclosure:

(Copy of letter from the Secretary, Assam Assembly Congress Party, to the General Secretary, A.I.C.C.)

Gauhati
January 18 1941

The Budget session of the Assam Legislature commences on March 3 and the few Congress M.L.A.s who, for one reason or other, have not offered Satyagraha, are confronted with the question as to whether or not they should attend the session

The majority of the members of the Congress Party including the Leader, Deputy Leader, Chief Whip., etc., are in gaol and the number remaining out is only about a fifth of the total strength.

I have not consulted the opinions of individual members but, speaking for myself, I must say that we would feel most miserable in the Assembly; nor would our presence materially contribute to the strength of the opposition.

I request that you would discuss the matter with Gandhiji and issue directions at an early date.

Attached here[with] is a list* of the M.L.A.s who have not offered Satyagraha.

Secretary
Assam Assembly Congress Party

P.S. The question of the Congress members on local bodies should also be looked into and directions as to whether those remaining outside should attend or abstain from meetings may be issued.

*List not included.

73. *From Arun Chandra Ghosh*

MANBHUM DISTRICT CONGRESS COMMITTEE

Purulia
February 14, 1941

Revered Rajendrababu,

According to the instructions given by Gandhiji and the circulars issued from the A.I.C.C. office it is apparent that the Congress as an organisation is no longer going to exist. In this situation please let us know whether the enrolment of the Congress members will be carried on as usual or it will be stopped altogether. So

please let us have your advice in this matter or inform us if any instruction from Gandhiji has been received about this matter.

With regards,

Yours affectionately,
Arun Chandra Ghosh

74. To J.B. Kripalani

Sadaquat Ashram
February 15, 1941

My dear Kripalaniji,

I have received your letter dated the 5th February. I am sorry I have not yet been able to come to Wardha as the work I had in hand has not been completed. I am trying my best to get through it as quickly as possible. Yesterday we finished the question of District Boards. I have still to give some time to the sugar-cane problem. It may take a few days more.

As regards Sjt. Chintamani Misra and Sjt. Nilakantha Das, you will recollect that Sjt. Chintamani Misra had made various allegations of corruption and dishonesty against Sjt. Biswanath Das, Prime Minister of Orissa, and I was deputed to go into the matter which I did at great length and I found the allegations unfounded. Sjt. Chintamani Misra thereafter apologised and the matter was dropped, no other action being taken. My impression was that Sjt. Nilakantha Das was acting behind the scene in this connection although he did not have the courage to definitely support or refute the accusations of Sjt. Chintamani Misra. We know the public activities of Sjt. Nilakantha Das and I think he has fully earned his expulsion from the Congress but I do not know whether you can take disciplinary action against any member at this time. There being neither the President nor the Working Committee functioning, any action taken may be challenged. We shall discuss the matter when I am there.

As regards the letter of Mr. M.A. Rizvi of Barh about the Secretary of the Bihar Provincial Congress Committee, it is true that he has not yet offered C.D. but this is because he is in charge of the P.C. office in the absence in jail of the General Secretary and it has been considered necessary for him to continue at any rate for the present. The writer has put down all the expenses incurred by the P.C. office to his debit. The salary of peons and servants of the P.C. office and the salary and running expenditure of the motor car of the P.C. office are all debited to his account. You can easily understand that all this is propaganda against him.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

75 To the Secretary, All India Congress Committee

Sadaquat Ashram
February 15, 1941

Dear Sir,

I am enclosing copy of a letter and my reply to it. The fixed deposit referred to therein is on account of a sum which belongs to the Andhra P.C.C. There was a dispute with regard to this amount between the Andhra P.C.C. and some members when Sjt. Subhas Bose was the President. The money was deposited therefore in the name of Sjt. Subhas Bose. It was subsequently realised from the Bank and kept in deposit for a certain period and the money is accordingly kept in deposit. The Andhra Committee will get it when the time comes. I am asking M/s. Bachhraj & Company to invest the interest accruing on it on a separate account so that when the money is handed over to that Committee, interest may also be handed over along with it.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

The Secretary
All India Congress Committee
Allahabad.

Enclosures not included.

76. To Deogirikar

Sadaquat Ashram
Dighaghat, Patna
February 18, 1941

Dear Mr. Deogirikar,

I received your letter. I regret the delay in replying. I hope to reach Wardha next week. My health is not such as to permit undertaking strenuous tour. It would be better therefore if you could arrange with Acharya Kripalani to visit Maharashtra for a few days. But in any case please write to me at Wardha from where I shall be able to give you a definite reply after consulting with Gandhiji and Kripalani. I need hardly add that the names suggested by you for the by-elections in the Central Assembly from Maharashtra have my approval.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

President
Maharashtra P.C.C.
Poona.

77. *From J.B. Kripalani*

Lucknow
February 22, 1941

RAJENDRABABU
SADAQUAT ASHRAM
PATNA

YOUR WIRE VISITED FYZABAD READY GO POONA AFTER 28TH PROCEEDING
ALLAHABAD

KRIPALANI

78. *To J.B. Kripalani*

Sadaquat Ashram
Patna
February 23, 1941

My dear Kripalani,

Many thanks for your telegram which I received last night. I feel much relieved to learn that you have already visited Fyzabad and that I can be spared. I hope it would be possible for you to spare me from Maharashtra tour also. It would be better if you telegraphically communicate to Mr. Deogirakar, President, Maharashtra Congress Committee, and ask him to fix the programme. I understand polling takes place on the 5th March so that you will have hardly two days between the first and the 4th.

I understand Bapu is arriving at Allahabad in the evening of the 27th. I take it that he is coming by the Bombay Mail. I have one doubt, however; there is no corresponding train from Wardha to Itarsi. To join the mainland, if he wishes to travel by the Mail, he will have to travel by the B.N.R. via Gondia to Jubbalpur which is a most uncomfortable journey both on account of the change at early 1 o'clock at night and on account of very uncomfortable carriages for the night. I hope to reach Allahabad on the 27th by the Delhi Express at about quarter to six in the evening which will be in good time before Bapu arrives. If, however, the information of Bapu's arrival by the Bombay Mail is incorrect or there is any change in his programme, kindly inform me so that I may suit my programme to his. I hope there would be accommodation for me in Swaraj Bhawan or Anand Bhawan. Kindly arrange.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

Sj. J.B. Kripalani
Gen. Secretary, A.I.C.C.
Sevagram, Wardha.

79. From the Secretary Madhya Pradesh Congress Committee

March 5, 1941

Revered Sir,

It is proposed to celebrate the 60th birthday of our worthy and respected leader Shri Veer Wamanrao Joshi, the President of our Provincial Congress Committee, in the third week of March 1941.

It is the sincere desire of all the Congress workers and Satyagrahis of this Province that you should grace the occasion by presiding over the function.

Will you, therefore, kindly let me know the date suitable to you to enable me to make proper arrangements accordingly? Please inform me if the 18th of March suits you.

Under the present conditions we have decided to make the function as simple as possible and hence we request you to kindly accept our invitation and oblige.

We await your early reply.

With best regards,

Yours truly,

(Sd.)

Secretary

Babu Rajendra Prasad
Sadaquat Ashram
Patna.

80 From Dr. Khan Sahib

Peshawar
March 19, 1941

My dear Rajendra Babuji,

Thanks ever so much for your letter. It is extremely painful for me to say that I would not be able to come to Bihar at present. My state of mind is so disturbed that even if I did come I would not be able to do any useful work. This is all due of course to the mental condition of my wife. In June-July or August I can come if I am otherwise not taken away. Your word has been always like an order to me and it will be wrong not to comply with it, but I am sure you will forgive me for the sake of my wife.

With love to Babuji,

Yours sincerely,
Dr. Khan

81. *From D.L. Adhyapak*

DISTRICT CONGRESS COMMITTEE, BELGAUM

Belgaum

March 20, 1941

Dear Rajendra Babu,

It is understood that you are going to open the Swadeshi Exhibition on the 6th of April at Harihar in Mysore State. The most convenient route for you is via Poona and Belgaum. The Belgaum District Congress Committee will feel obliged to you if you will kindly make it convenient to break your journey here for a day either on your way to Harihar or on your return journey. The break in the journey will give you some rest. Your visit will be a source of inspiration and guidance to workers who are still out. I may mention that the district has sent 178 Satyagrahis to jail to date.

Please let me know your consent by the return of post so as to enable me to fix the programme in consultation with the organisers of the Exhibition.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,

D.L. Adhyapak

Secretary, D.C.C., Belgaum

82. *From the President, Utkal Provincial Congress Committee*

March 22, 1941

My dear Friend,

It is quite well known to you that since the resignation of the Congress Ministry in this Province Pandit Godavaris Misra and Pandit Nilakantha Das have been trying to form an alternative Ministry by joining the anti-Congress Party in the Assembly.

Before this Sri Godavaris Misra, Sri Jadumani Mangaraj and Sri Dibakar Patnaik, three members of the Congress Assembly Party, have openly joined the anti-Congress Party for which they have already been removed from the Congress Party and have been debarred to become primary members of the Congress for three years.

So far the attempt could not be successful as no other members of the Assembly Congress Party were willing to join hands with them. It is now learnt that Sri Atal Bihari Acharya of Nayasarak, P.O. Chandnichouk, Cuttack, another member of the Congress Assembly Party, has joined with them and is approaching and inducing other members of the Party to follow him. On being asked by me he admitted that he is really doing so and is inducing others also to do so. But to my letters to inform me in writing he is keeping strict silence and

avoids to commit in writing. He has also told me that another member of the Party, Sri Biswanath Behera of Banamalipur, P.O. Banamalipur, District Puri, has also joined the group, who again does not reply to my letters.

All the prominent Congress M.L.A.s of this Province are now in jail and, taking advantage of this circumstance, they are now redoubling their attempt of forming a Ministry. Sri Charuchandra Ray, Advocate, Balasore, another member of the Congress Assembly Party, who refused to join the anti-Congress Party is now being approached by them and induced to resign his seat so that they can secure a majority.

The local newspaper, the *Samaj*, tells us that they are going to have a meeting of the Party (anti-Congress) on 26th of this month to settle details of their programme.

As the matter is an important one I think it is my duty to acquaint you with the whole fact. If you think it necessary you can ascertain from Sri Atal Bihari Acharya, M.L.A., Nayasarak, P.O. Chandnichouk, Cuttack; Sri Biswanath Behera, M.L.A., P.O. Banamalipur, District Puri; and Sri Charuchandra Ray, M.L.A., Advocate, Balasore. the truth of the above and take any action you think proper.

With best regards to you,

I remain,
Yours sincerely,
President
Utkal Provincial Congress Committee

83. *From K. Pattabhi Raman*

THE MYSORE CONGRESS

Cottonpet
Bangalore City
March 22, 1941

Dear Rajendra Babuji,

Shri H.C. Dasappa writes from Sewagram to send you a small packet of papers and booklets such as to give you an idea of the political developments here from some time past. I hope that the packet sent by separate book-post today will give you such an idea.

With best regards,

I remain,
Sincerely yours,
K. Pattabhi Raman

Dr. Rajendra Prasad
Sadaquat Ashram
Dighaghat, Patna.

84. *From Jugal Kishore Khanna*

DELHI PROVINCIAL SATYAGRAHA (CONGRESS) COMMITTEE

Chandni Chowk
Delhi
March 23, 1941

My dear Babuji,

I understand that you will be in Delhi for a few days on or about the 11th April 1941 in connection with the Basic Education Conference. On behalf of the Delhi Satyagraha Committee I take the opportunity of welcoming you and to request you to kindly grace some of our functions to be held during the National Week with your presence. We are having a Kisan Conference on the 10th April and celebrating Jallianwala Bagh Day on the 13th and hope that you will arrange your Delhi programme so as to give us some time at least on these two dates.

I am confident that you will accede to our request.

Yours sincerely,
Jugal Kishore Khanna

85. *From H.C. Dasappa*

Sevagram
Wardha
March 24, 1941

My dear Rajen Babu,

The same evening you left Wardha I received a note from Sjt. Kaka Kalelkarji stating your programme to visit Shravanabelgola, Behu and Halebid was a fixture and that I could go ahead with my arrangements. I have accordingly written to the respective places. It means that we must leave Wardha on the 3rd by Grand Trunk and go to Bangalore direct. We will spend there just the time needed for bath and chota and set out by car to Shravanabelgola without delay. We will take food and rest for the noon probably at Hassan and visit Belur and Halebid the same evening or the next morning and then proceed to Wardha direct. We will be well in time for the function. We can go to Bangalore via Secunderabad and by Guntukal but then it means more charges with no saving of time. If you approve of the journey via Madras, I will have the berth booked and the tour programme announced, so that the Congress friends in Madras may meet you at the station if they desire to.

Our friends Bashyam and others may have told you that the Government was reluctant to cooperate with our exhibition. They may not be sending us any

exhibits. I have not heard from the Secretary of the Exhibition, who has written to Government and sent two reminders, but has not had any replies as yet.

I will thank you to let me have your programme till the 31st inst. to enable me to send any urgent communication that may be necessary.

With best regards,

Yours sincerely,
H.C. Dasappa

86. *To J.B. Kripalani*

Sadaquat Ashram
Patna
March 27, 1941

My dear Kripalaniji,

I am enclosing a letter which I have received from Assam. I agree with the writer that we should not ask the Speaker to resign. Please consult Babu and send instructions to the Provincial office as he directs. It would be perhaps necessary to give publicity to the instruction which you issue in the provincial Press of Assam and Bengal for the protection of the Speaker who is being made the target of attack by some local papers.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

Enclosure not included

87. *To Dr. Khan Sahib*

Laheriasara
March 28, 1941

My dear Dr. Khan Sahib,

Many thanks for your letter. I am so sorry to hear of the illness of your wife and your consequent natural anxiety. I do hope that under your loving care she is improving. As on account of this unfortunate circumstance you are unable to come, I am writing to Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and would request you to put in a word on our behalf with him.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

88. *To Jugal Kishore Khanna*

Sadaquat Ashram
Patna
March 31, 1941

My dear Mr. Jugal Kishore Khanna,

I have received your letter dated 23rd March. I am going to Delhi only for Basic Education Conference and shall not stay there for more than a day at the most. I am hoping to reach there on the night of the 10th or the morning of the 11th and shall be leaving for Calcutta on the night of the 11th or the morning of the 12th. I do not know at what time the Basic Education Conference opens. If you can arrange with the organisers of the Conference, you may ask the workers to meet me and so arrange the programme that it may not clash with the Conference. I do not think there will be time for a public meeting. I shall most probably start by the Delhi Express on the night of the 11th at 8.56 p.m., failing that latest by the Delhi Mail early in the morning of the 12th.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

89. *From Dr. Khan Sahib*

Peshawar
April 7, 1941

DR RAJENDRAPRASAD
PATNA

BROTHER TOURING KNOW LITTLE ABOUT DIWAN MANGALSAIN BUT SEE NO HARM

DR KHAN

90. *From Deogirikar*

April 17, 1941

Dear Rajendrababu,

During the latest elections of the Central Assembly we were faced with a very serious difficulty. In the rules and the regulations of the elections it has been laid down that payment or promise of payment for conveyance to the voters is illegal. Voter may of his own accord hire a vehicle but a candidate or his election agent or

any other person with the conveyance of the candidate or his election agent cannot give promise or cannot make payment for any vehicle. Thus hiring of private or public vehicles has been declared as an illegal act. I think, these rules are not practical. In the Provincial Assembly Elections under the 1935 Government of India Act, hiring of public vehicles has been allowed. I don't know with what object this restriction has been kept in the Central Assembly election. Do you think the old rules are yet to be amended? It will be good if you make a reference to the Government and get this discrepancy cleared. It will not be possible for any organisation to contest Central Assembly elections under the present rules and hope for success. There is a possibility of a general election of the Central Assembly in coming November. We would like this point cleared before the elections. The Government may or may not amend that rule. In case we get a negative reply, advise us what to do. It goes very hard to request voters from distant places to go to polling stations to give their votes.

Will you kindly reply?

Yours sincerely,
Deogirikar
President
Maharashtra P.C.C.

91. *To Deogirikar*

Sadaquat Ashram
Patna
April 23, 1941

Dear Mr. Deogirikar,

I have just received your letter of the 17th April 1941. I do not know what I can do to get the Election Rules changed. It is a matter to be agitated through the Press and not by means of representation. Particularly the Congress organisation is not in a position today to take up this matter with any chance of being listened to. Besides I am not so sure about the utility of t' e change which you suggest. It might have the effect of facilitating the work of electioneering of rich people who can afford to spend unlimited amounts. Congress candidates ordinarily speaking are not so situated and may find themselves at a disadvantage as compared with others.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

President
Maharashtra P.C.C.
Congress Bhawan, Shivaji Nagar
Poona No. 5

92. From Chandrika Ram

Theosophical Lodge
P.O. Bankipur
Patna
May 7, 1941

Sir,

I am directed to enclose the copies of the resolutions passed by the Fourth Session of the Bihar Provincial Depressed Classes League held at Darbhanga on the 3rd May 1941, for information and necessary action.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,

Your most obedient servant,
Chandrika Ram
General Secretary

Bihar Provincial Depressed Classes League

Dr. Rajendra Prasad
President, B.P.C.C.
Sadaquat Ashram
Patna.

Enclosure:

(Resolutions passed at the Fourth Session of the Bihar Provincial Depressed Classes League held at Darbhanga on the 3rd May 1941)

Resolution No. 2

Whereas the Scheduled Castes are the original inhabitants of the country and whereas they have since long been kept suppressed socially, politically and economically by the members of the Hindu community, the interest of whom lies in keeping the Scheduled Castes tugged on them so that they may continue to usurp the rights and exploit the labour-power of the Scheduled Castes by dint of their already superior and advantageous educational and economic attainments and whereas it has been the sad experience of the members of the Scheduled Castes that a very limited number of the members of the Hindu community who profess only and proclaim the upliftment of the Scheduled Castes have been sincere in their profession inasmuch as when their own economic and political interests (either individual or collective) comes in clash with those of the

Scheduled Castes, they are without exception found standing against the Scheduled Castes even if their stand be quite devoid of equity and justice. This Conference therefore while completely associating itself with India's demand for self-determination asserts that the Scheduled Castes, as a recognised minority commanding at least 20 per cent of the total population of the subcontinent, should have distinct voice in framing the future constitution for the governance of the country. This Conference further wishes to make it clear that any constitution in the framing of which the Scheduled Castes will not have a free voice will be unacceptable to them.

Resolution No. 4

This Conference notes with discontent the attitude of the authorities of such local bodies (District Boards, Municipalities) as have majority of Congress members towards the problem of the Scheduled Castes inasmuch as they have totally ignored the Scheduled Castes and have done nothing tangible for the improvement of service condition, of education, of sanitation, and of economic welfare of the Scheduled Castes as also for the encouragement of their hereditary occupation such as tanning, leather goods manufacturing, bamboo and cane works, bristle works, etc., on modern scientific lines.

Resolution No. 5

In view of the above resolution this Conference draws the attention of Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the President of the Bihar Provincial Congress Committee, towards the criminal neglect of the interest of the Scheduled Castes in even such local bodies as are under the Congress control and requests the Bihar Provincial Congress Committee to take immediate steps for establishment at an early date of training institutes for tanning, leather goods manufacturing, etc., by Congress controlled Boards as also for earmarking of sufficient amount for the education of the Scheduled Castes.

Resolution No. 6

This Conference while fully agreeing with the other minorities of the country that the members of the majority communities to whichever party they belong have so far failed by their actions to inspire confidence in them, strongly holds that the vivisection of the country cannot solve the problem of the minority—rather it will accentuate the difference and enlarge the gulf between them. The Depressed Classes League therefore while striving hard to safeguard the rights and interests of the Scheduled Castes and of other minorities shall put a stubborn resistance by all possible means to all efforts to divide their motherland.

Resolution No. 7

This Conference records its protest against the attitude of the Spinners'

Association (Bihar Branch) in keeping the various departments of the institution a close reserve for the caste Hindus to the entire exclusion of members of the Scheduled Castes and requests Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the Agent in charge of the Branch, to look into the matter and to see that the members of the Scheduled Castes are also appointed in its various departments.

Resolution No. 10

The Conference is strongly opposed to the idea of the conversion of the members of the Scheduled Castes in the Province and it requests the Hindu communities not to oppress the members of the Scheduled Castes by taking from them forced and unpaid labour and treating them badly in social, economic and political matters. It further requests the Arya Samaj, the Hindu Sewak Sangh not to neglect this vital problem for a moment and constitute to this direction as far as they can. In this matter state-aid is not possible, hence it wholly depends upon the generous public of the Province to try by all means to keep their brethren (members of the Scheduled Castes) in the Hindu fold.

Resolution No. 12

This Conference reiterates its full faith in the Poona Pact (the Charter of Liberty for the Scheduled Castes) and present arrangement for the representation of the Scheduled Castes in the Provincial Councils and Assemblies (though the seats reserved for them are not sufficient according to the population basis), but puts its strong demand for the reservation of seats in the local bodies, District Boards and Municipalities, as the experience of the recent election in the local bodies of the Province has shown the selfish and unsympathetic attitude of the Hindu public at large. Further, this Conference requests the Government of Bihar to amend the Local Self-Government Act of 1922 in the light of this resolution so that the interest of the Scheduled Castes may be safeguarded and protected.

93. *From Lala Jagannath*

PUNJAB PROVINCIAL CONGRESS COMMITTEE

PERSONAL

Lajpatrai Bhawan
Lahore
May 17, 1941

Revered Babuji,

It has given us all great pleasure to read in the papers how you are trying to relieve the Hindu-Muslim tension. The success that is meeting your efforts in

these apparently impossible times has put heart into us. I have always believed that the people, both Hindus as well as Muslims, are sound and by nature docile and that if they are left alone by the mischief-makers, they will either not fight or even if they fight they will make up soon. Our prayers and good wishes are with you. May God fulfil Bapuji's wish and may you be the deliverer of India from communal strife!

I shall feel obliged if you could find time to let me know how you are planning your work. What would you advise us to do in the Punjab by way of prevention?

One thing more, you were present during Mian Iftikhar-ud-Din's talks with Bapuji. He had separate talks with you also. Please let me know your reactions to the discussions. How should we deal with Communist friends (like Mian Sahib), about whose tactics and methods of work you are fully aware? How do you deal with them in your Province? Are there any office-bearers of the Bihar Provincial Congress Committee who are Communists? How would you have reacted to a President of the Bihar P.C.C. who combined open and secret propagation of Communism with the discharge of his routine duties?

What did Mian Sahib tell Bapuji and yourself to clear his position? What do you think of his explanation?

With regards,

Yours sincerely,
Jagannath

94. *From Venkataswami Naidu*

Madras
May 17, 1941

BABU RAJENDRA PRASAD
SADAQUAT ASHRAM
PATNA

PROCEEDING WARDHA TO MEET GANDHIJI REGARDING MADRAS
CORPORATION ELECTIONS INTENDING MEETING YOU ALSO IF NECESSARY WIRE
WARDHA WHERE TO MEET

VENKATASWAMI NAIDU
EX-MAYOR

95. *From Venkataswami Naidu*

Wardha
19 May 1941

BABU RAJENDRA PRASAD
PATNA

MAHATMAJI GRANTED PERMISSION TO CONTEST BY-ELECTIONS MADRAS

CITY COUNCIL PROCEEDING MADRAS URGENT BUSINESS EXCUSE INABILITY
JOURNEY PATNA

VENKATASWAMI NAIDU

96. *To Lala Jagannath*

PERSONAL

Sadaquat Ashram
Patna
May 23, 1941

My dear Lala Jagannath,

I have just received your letter after my return from a short tour in connection with the efforts for establishing calm communal atmosphere. I have been going about addressing public meetings and holding private discussions in which I have invariably asked all classes of people to agree to one thing, namely, not to resort to force for settling any points of dispute. They should in the first instance be settled by mutual discussion and agreement or by arbitration and in the last resort by resort to law court if no other method succeeds, but in [no] case by the use of force. This is the line of least resistance when I found that the points are not capable of settlement either because they are of an all-India nature and can be settled only on an all-India basis and not in a Province or because the parties are in no mood to have a settlement. The work is difficult as much distrust has been created and there are groups which do not care for settlement but are more concerned with their existence and continuance. The incidents of Bihar are largely the result of happenings elsewhere, e.g. Sind and Dacca, although on a very much smaller scale. I am being attacked by Hindus for condemning alleged atrocities on their part when I did not condemn Muslim atrocities alleged to have been committed by Muslims in Dacca. But I have made it a rule not to judge and condemn those who are not likely to attach any importance to my words. The attitude of the Muslim League is not as helpful as it could have been although its President and I have addressed jointly two meetings at Patna. There are some people who care more for tension than for calm atmosphere and they have not ceased to work.

Yes, I met Mian Iftikhar-ud-Din at Wardha. He denied many of the allegations which had been made to Bapu against him. But he admitted that he was a socialist by conviction and he used to discuss socialism with friends but he assured him that he had been a loyal Congressman and had never done anything to undermine the Congress prestige and has always tried his best to give effect to the official Congress programme.

We have no such problems in my Province. There is nobody holding any responsible office in the Provincial Committee who holds any different view.

There are some Congress Socialists in the Provincial Committee as also in some of the District Committees but are carrying on without any difficulty.

Lala Jagannath
Lajpatrai Bhawan, Lahore.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

97. *To J.B. Kripalani*

Sadaquat Ashram
Patna
May 25, 1941

My dear Kripalaniji,

I am herewith enclosing to you copy of a letter which I have written to S.J. Dhirajlal B. Desai in response to a request made by S.J. N.S. Kajrolkar, a Depressed Class Congress Member of the Bombay Corporation who was a Congress candidate at the Assembly Election of 1937 but unfortunately lost. This raises an important question of all-India importance. The voters' list is under revision in all the Provinces. We have not given any instructions to the Provincial Committees in this connection from the A.I.C.C. or the Parliamentary Committee. I do not know how far our Provincial Committees will be able to attend to this matter in the present circumstances. You will please consult Bapu and if he approves, instructions may be issued to Provincial offices to see to it that at any rate the names of any likely Congress candidates are not left out. I am not sure if the Provincial Committee will be able to set up a machinery for this purpose and there is just a risk of the instructions remaining unattended to. The position of the Depressed Classes in the Bombay Presidency, C.P. and Madras stands on a somewhat different footing from elsewhere and may necessitate separate treatment. I have therefore asked S.J. Dhirajlalji to decide for himself after consulting other friends there.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

Enclosure not included.

98. *From D.K. Gosavi*

MAHARASHTRA PROVINCIAL CONGRESS COMMITTEE

Poona
June 14, 1941

Dear Rajendrababu,

Myself and Dr. Lagu propose to go to Wardha to see both Gandhiji and

yourself. It is understood from papers that you are now at Wardha and might stop there for about a week or so more.

We can go to Wardha on any date between 20th and 23rd or on any date from the 27th of June 1941. Let me know which date might suit you. We have to discuss things both with you and Gandhiji.

Waiting for your reply.

I am,
Yours sincerely,
D.K. Gosavi
President

99. *To the Secretary, Bengal Provincial Congress Committee*

Sevagram
Wardha
June 15, 1941

Dear Friend,

I shall be in Calcutta on the 23rd and the 24th in connection with a meeting of the Rashtra Bhasha Prachar Samiti. It has been suggested that I should pay a visit to the villages in the Dacca District which have been the scene of disturbances. I may leave Calcutta by the Dacca Mail on the night of the 24th, reaching Narayanganj [at] noon of the 25th. If it is possible to visit the affected villages the same evening and on the morning of the 26th, then I could take the steamer on the 26th at noon at Narayanganj and return to Calcutta on the morning of the 27th and proceed to Patna. Acharya Kripalani will also be going with me. If you think that a visit of this kind will be of any use, please write to me so that I may finally fix up the programme. We are leaving this place for Vizagapatam on the morning of the 19th and I expect a reply from you before it. In case you agree that we should visit the villages, you will kindly have to make arrangements at Narayanganj Ghat to take us to the affected places. I am writing to S.J. Annada Pd. Choudhury also who has originally made this suggestion to me. You will kindly make such arrangements as are necessary in consultation with him.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

The Secretary
Bengal Provincial Congress Committee
Calcutta.

100. *From D.K. Gosavi*

MAHARASHTRA PROVINCIAL CONGRESS COMMITTEE

Poona
June 15, 1941

Dear Rajendra Babu,

One letter is posted to you just in the morning. It is now found out that the dates given to you, viz., between 20th and 23rd are not convenient to both of us, Dr. Lagu and myself. We can reach Wardha on any day beginning with the 27th inst. (morning). It is hoped that you might be available at Wardha on the 27th or on succeeding dates.

Please treat my earlier letter as amended by this letter and let me have your reply on this changed basis.

At any rate let me know as to how long you are at Wardha and when at the latest you must leave Wardha.

Yours sincerely,
D.K. Gosavi
President

101. *From Shah Mohamad Umair*

Umairabad
P.O. Arwal
Gaya, Behar
June 15, 1941

My dear Sir,

We are relieved to learn from news that you have been feeling satisfactorily improved at Wardha, but feel a bit concerned at your prolonged stay there. We hope and pray that you may soon return back with the best of health. I am writing these words from Patna as I have been staying here for the last one and a half month in connection with the ailment of my wife who is being treated here. But we are leaving for Arwal tomorrow and so I hope to be favoured with a reply there (Arwal).

In the year 1936, I intend to remind you, I had very emphatically urged upon you the necessity of mobilising Muslim public opinion in this Province, by starting a full-fledged campaign in that direction through a scheme verbally submitted and proposed to you. Again sometime after, when the Muslim Workers Conference and the Sadaquat Ashram deliberated under the presidentship of uncle Mathura Prasad to carry on with the mass contact

programme, I had placed my suggestion for a renewed effort, which was unanimously agreed upon. Further, after the Azad Muslim Conference at Delhi and after Mr. Abdul Aziz had left Patna for Hyderabad, I had very strongly tried to impress upon you the desirability of making determined headway to the Muslim masses in view of the many-sided advantages then available. But from that down to this time, how those proposals have been given effect to by the persons to whom such duties from time to time had been entrusted by the B.P.C.C. is more than obvious to you.

The Muslim Congressite in general have developed for long past miserable task of sitting inactive and as such they present very unhappy specimen and no source of encouragement to others. Their poor response to the present Satyagraha is equally deplorable. But for the absence of such response and many more disappointments on the part of the Congressite Muslims, I may be pardoned and I am sure your natural affection for me and your proverbial goodness will certainly secure this pardon, I may be permitted to add that the misplaced confidence and reliance reposed in one particular individual whom I need not name and his selection as the real master of the destiny of the minority department in the Provincial Congress is chiefly responsible.

I am not accustomed, as is sufficiently known to you, to approach and worry you with any fresh question. I have always considered it [as an impertinence] and my unbounded reverence for your saintly self, which I so deeply cherish as an idol of idols within my heart, hardly permitted me to refer to you anything which related to an individual and which constituted any public and private grievance. But it is simply with a heavy heart that I venture to refer here to one, whom you all know and whose arrogance and vanity has always stood in the way of Muslim Congress element. Indeed, I stood pale when I learnt invariably from many a Congressite who wanted to offer Satyagraha, that they were persuaded by him not to do so. Whatever may be his arguments, but it is no secret that the said gentleman has exposed before many responsible Congressmen his own disgust and the futility of the present movement and so his persuasion to Muslim Congressites against that. I am indeed ashamed to enter into such abominable details particularly when it concerns a person. But I am compelled to prefer this, perhaps for the first time in my life, because I intend to impress upon you, with all respect, how the political well-being of all the Congressite and other Muslim nationalist elements demand your personal guidance and direct attention to be moulded afresh. It is open to you, as to others, to determine the degrees of improvement or their deterioration in the field of practical politics and propagation of Congress ideals in the Muslim masses by the person entrusted with such responsibilities from time to time. In short, I may be allowed to observe that such state of affairs, if left unnoticed, the Muslim Congressmen will become incumbent (sic) upon the organisation.

I am told that about one thousand rupees was spent over the summer school politics at Gaya. We do not as yet know wherefrom this programme cropped up. It is, however, very keenly felt in responsible circles that the amount could have

more usefully and extensively been utilised in reorganising the entire Muslim workers of the Province in one centre and then letting them off in different small groups in different parts with a certain fixed programme to go round the important places forming their contact with the Muslim masses and handling them suitably.

With the above-expressed feelings, which I have tried to cut much short, I intend to acquaint you with the well-considered proposal of the "Progressive Muslim Front" which I have placed as an alternative effort for reorganising the Congress Muslims and widening their scope by bringing round the scattered and unmobilised progressive and nationalist elements in the Province with them.

The Nationalist Conference and so the Azad Conference having been put aside, besides the same being on an all-India basis, couldn't produce the desired result. And as such I am confident that the proposed "Progressive Muslim Front" may meet the present organizational mould [and] may create fresh vigour and zeal among the Congressite and nationalist Muslim elements, with a forward march towards the Muslim masses if the same is blessed by you.

These words in my fit of anxiety and earnestness to hear from you. Hoping you in the best of health and hoping to be excused for the unexpectedly lengthy [letter], with respects,

Yours affectionately,
Shah Mohamad Umair

102. *From the President, Bengal Provincial Congress Committee*

June 20, 1941

DR RAJENDRA PRASAD
CARE SCINDIA STEAM NAVIGATION
VIZAGAPATAM

LETTER RECEIVED YESTERDAY AFTERNOON STOP WEATHER UNFAVOURABLE
FOR VISITING VILLAGES STOP INSPECTION NOT POSSIBLE UNLESS STAY
ANOTHER DAY

PRESIDENT

103. *From Sarangadhar Das*

RAJENDRAPRASAD
CARE SCINDIA STEAM NAVIGATION
VIZAGAPATAM

YOUR LETTER PADHIARI DEPARTED SEVAGRAM EIGHTEENTH KRIPALANI
YOUR PRESSURE OPPORTUNE HELPFUL ADVISING WORKERS ASSEMBLY MEET
BOTH CUTTACK TWENTYSECOND MORNING CONFIRM

SARANGADHAR DAS

104. *To J.B. Kripalani*

Sadaquat Ashram

Patna

June 30, 1941

My dear Kripalaniji,

I forgot to speak to you about one matter which is important. You know there has been a severe cyclone in the Bakargunge district which has caused vast devastation. I think the A.I.C.C. should contribute something towards relief in the district. I think the A.I.C.C. does not ordinarily give money for relief in such circumstances but the present conditions are exceptional and it is not possible to raise funds by a public appeal. I would therefore suggest that as an exceptional case, the A.I.C.C. should pay Rs.2,000. Sj. Satin Sen has got a relief committee which is working there. His handicap is for want of funds. The sufferers being mostly Muslims, as the population of the affected area is about 90 p.c. Muslim, any appeal to Hindus in Bengal for relief would not evoke response. I have therefore made the suggestion. You may consult Bapu, Jamnalal and take necessary steps. You may consult the B.P.C.C. also so that they may not feel that you have acted over their head.

I arrived here yesterday morning. In the afternoon I felt feverish. At once temperature was taken. It was 103°. Cough is also there. Temperature is still high. I apprehended this and so I wanted to come away by the first available train. There is no reason for anxiety.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

105. *From J.B. Kripalani*

ALL INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE

Sevagram

June 30, 1941

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I am herewith sending you two letters from the Ajmere P.C.C. Recently the Ajmere Municipal Board voted a contribution to the war fund. There the Congress Party, in pursuance of our directions, tendered their resignations forthwith. The prompt resignations had a favourable impression on the people. The Government now have ordered fresh elections. The P.C.C. President wants to know whether they can contest these elections. He and many of his colleagues are of opinion that the elections should be contested. They felt that if not declared

unopposed, the Congress candidates will win by a comfortable majority. Bapu does not want to give any opinion in the matter. He has asked me to refer the matter to you. You will please let us know what directions are to be sent to the Ajmere P.C.C. If you convey your decision to them direct you will please send us a copy of the same.

With respects,

Yours sincerely,
J.B. Kripalani

Dr. Rajendra Prasad
Patna.

Enclosures not included

106. *To Sadik Ali*

Sadaquat Ashram
Patna
July 14, 1941

My dear Sadik Ali,

Your letter dated the 4th July 1941.

(1) Re Ajmer matter I have already written to you giving my opinion and forwarding the previous correspondence.

(2) As regards the Vidarbha case, I think there is a circular asking office-bearers of local bodies to resign their offices before offering Satyagraha. If that is so then this gentleman should have resigned his Presidentship before he offered Satyagraha. It seems he has not done that. It is possible that by attending the meeting and by acting as a Chairman he will be able to retain his seat which he might lose on account of his continued absence from his duties. It is also not clear whether he is going to offer Civil Disobedience again and when. If he is offering C.D. again, then I think this time he should resign and get someone else elected in his place and then offer C.D. If this opinion of mine is not in conflict with any previous instructions, you may reply according to this.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

Mr. Sadik Ali
Sevagram
Wardha.

107. *To J.B. Kripalani*

Sadaquat Ashram

Patna

July 14, 1941

My dear Kripalaniji,

Here is a letter from Palakol, West Godavari district, in Andhra. I do not know what instructions you gave to the members of the District Board, Vizag. I am therefore sending this to you so that you may take necessary steps which may not conflict with instructions which you previously issued. I am also enclosing correspondence relating to local bodies to which I have replied for your information so that conflicting instructions may not be issued by the office there.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

Sj. J.B. Kripalani
Sevagram
Wardha.

Enclosures not included

108. *From Dr. Gopichand Bhargava*

Lajpatrai Bhawan

Lahore

July 19, 1941

My dear Babuji,

I came to know yesterday that Provincial Assembly elections are not going to be held for 2 years for the present. Members of Congress Party do not attend Session. Some are in jail, some will be again in jail, some have not offered themselves for Satyagraha, and 2 are attending. Why not call upon those who are not attending and are not going to jail, to resign their seats and vacate for others? In the Punjab, Congress Party is in minority and therefore it does not matter whether Congressmen are there or not. When they are not Satyagrahis, why should not they vacate the seats? Please give the suggestion a favourable consideration and let me know your views and decision.

Mian Sahib has toured some districts and organised Peace Committees. There is a Central Committee as well. This General Central Committee has appointed a Standing Committee. A Press Sub-Committee has also been appointed. Representatives of various communal political organisations have agreed to work on the Committee. But the work done so far is that a poster bearing signatures of Muslims was permitted in Sargodha by the Police. It was on the day

when 2 Sikhs were killed by Muslims last year. It caused great resentment and there was a chance of a riot. 3 leading Congressmen were sent by the Peace Committee. An Ahrar leader was to speak at the meeting of Muslims. All these four so managed that instead of rioting, there was goodwill prevailing and if it were not [for] the death anniversary day of 2 Sikhs, Sikhs and Hindus would have served sharbat to the Muslims.

Nothing more than this has been done. Please let me know your advice in the matter as to how should we proceed further in the matter. What should be the line of work of these Committees?

There is one more matter on which I seek your opinion. It is whether we should organise Peace Brigades or not and if so under whose auspices. We do not expect requisite non-violence from even Congressmen, much less from men belonging to other parties. Should we have a separate organisation for this purpose or can we organise it under the Congress?

I will feel further obliged if you were to let me know in brief as to what have you been able to do in your Province so far and how much do you expect to do in future.

Please supply me with a draft of the Constitution and Rules of any of the Peace Committees and Peace Brigades.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,
Gopichand Bhargava

Babu Rajendra Prasadji
Patna.

109. *From Mian Iftikhar-ud-Din*

Bradlaugh Hall
Lahore
July 25, 1941

My dear Babuji,

As you may have seen in the Press, Doctor Satyapal has resigned from the Congress and has asked me to let him know the procedure that he is to adopt for resigning from the Punjab Legislative Assembly to which he was elected on the Congress ticket. I am enclosing herewith a copy of the reply that I have sent to him as well as that of his own letter. As soon as I receive his resignation from the Assembly it will be forwarded to you. It is not within the domain of the Provincial Congress Committee to deal with the resignation of the members of the Assembly.

Dr. Satyapal has not stated any cause for his resignation in his letter but he has issued statements to the Press. I am enclosing herewith Press cutting of these

Dr. Rajendra Prasad:

statements* for your information. Please let me know what you propose to do or instruct me what I am to do with regard to this matter. I am also writing to Gandhiji about it.

I hope you are feeling well.

With best regards,

Yours sincerely,
M. Iftikhar-ud-Din

P.S. After I had written this letter to you I learn that your health is not at all good these days. If so, do not bother about this matter. Bapuji will probably deal with it. I hope you will be soon all right.

*Not included.

Enclosure 1:

(Copy of letter from Dr. Satyapal, M.L.A., dated 12.7.41 to the President, Punjab Provincial Congress Committee, Lahore)

Dear Sir,

I resign my primary membership of the Congress. I shall request you to please accept it.

I wish to resign my M.L.A.ship. Please inform me as to whether the resignation is to be sent to you or directly to H.E. the Governor.

Yours faithfully,
Satyapal

Enclosure 2:

(Copy of letter dated 25th July 1941 from Mian Iftikhar-ud-Din, President, Punjab Provincial Congress Committee, Lahore, to Dr. Satyapal, M.L.A., Abbott Road, Lahore)

Re: The letter of resignation dated 12.7.41 from primary membership of the Congress.

Dear Sir,

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated 12.7.41 of resignation from the primary membership of the Congress.

As regards your request for information about the procedure that is to be adopted for submitting resignation from the membership of the Punjab Legislative Assembly, I have to inform you that this resignation (addressed to the Governor, Punjab, in your own hand) is to be sent to me.

Both the above-mentioned matters will be dealt with by the Provincial Congress Committee in accordance with our usual procedure and you will be duly informed.

Yours faithfully,
M. Iftikhar-ud-Din

110. *From J.B. Kripalani*

ALL INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE

Sevagram
July 25, 1941

My dear Rajendrababu,

I came here day before [yesterday] evening. You remember you had written to me about aid to be given from the A.I.C.C. funds to the flood-stricken in Bengal. I had written to you that I had sent your letter to Wardha. Sadik consulted Jamnalaji and Bapu. Both are of opinion that it will be a bad precedent. We have never given funds from the A.I.C.C. for any such purpose in the past. There has been no provision in the budget for such expenditure. Also there is news from many quarters of floods and if we give to one place we will be required to give to another place as well. I, therefore, think that the best thing would be to drop the proposal, more so when Bapu has said that he is writing to the Marwari Relief Fund drawing their attention to this case.

I am dealing with the local bodies questions in the light of very conflicting instructions issued by the Provinces themselves and by us from time to time. Bapu's instructions also land us into contradictions. There are consequently complaints from everywhere. When we were together in our trip you were definitely of the view that it was time we withdrew Congressmen from the local bodies. I hear in your Province very important Congress office-holders have not offered themselves for Satyagraha simply because they are connected with local boards and municipalities. In these circumstances would it not be better to devise a uniform policy for the whole of India and finally to decide whether we are to function in the local bodies as an organised party or not? Is there any likelihood of your coming this side in the immediate future?

When I was in Allahabad a friend from Gaya came to induce me to consent to preside over a Conference to be held there within a few days. He said he had approached you to preside, but you had expressed inability owing to your ill health. I had heard that your health was normal again. Anyway, I told the friend that as he had brought no letter from you I could say nothing in the matter. You will advise me what to do. Is this the time for calling big conferences?

Things here are going on as usual. With pranams,

Yours sincerely,
J.B. Kripalani

111. *To Ramdas Pantulu*

Sadaquat Ashram
Patna
July 26, 1941

My dear Ramdas Pantulu,

Mr. Shantikumar Narottam Morarjee of Bombay has placed at my disposal a sum of Rs.2,500 for distribution amongst various institutions of Andhra Desh at my discretion. I had a talk in this matter with Mr. A.V. Thakkar and have come to the conclusion that the sum may be distributed to the following institutions in the amount as shown below:

1. To the Dakshin Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha for work in Andhra Desh	Rs. 1,000
2. To the various branches of the Harijan Sevak Sangh in Andhra Desh	Rs. 1,000
3. For the work amongst aborigines being conducted by one Mr. Mandeswara Sarma of the Vizag Highland, (II) Shri V. Raghavia, Nellore, for work amongst the Yenadis of Nellore district	Rs. 500
	<u>Rs. 2,500</u>

I am sending copies of this letter to Mr. Satyanarayan of the Dakshin Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha and Mr. A.V. Thakkar.

Will you kindly let me know in what way you wish the distribution amongst various Harijan Sanghs to be done? I would request you to show special preference to Vizag Harijan Sevak Sangh and Guntur Industrial School for the Harijans.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

Copies forwarded to Sj. A.V. Thakkar, Gen. Secretary, All India Harijan Sevak Sangh, Kingsway, Delhi, and to Sj. M. Satyanarayan, Dakshin Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha, Thyagaraja Nagar, Madras.

112. *To Mian Iftikhar-ud-Din*

Sadaquat Ashram
Patna
July 28, 1941

My dear Mian Saheb,

Many thanks for your letter of the 25th instant. I have not been keeping well

and some slight temperature and cough continue to give me trouble. I am therefore not able to do any work. The doctors have assured me that with rest it will pass off and there is nothing to worry about.

I have seen some of the statements of Dr. Satyapal in the Press and you have been good enough to send me the cuttings also. I think his resignation from the Congress should be accepted and his resignation from the Assembly should be forwarded to the proper quarters. But since you have written to Kripalaniji and Gandhiji also, you may await their instructions also.

I read the other day in some local papers that you are coming to Patna to preside over or open Students' Conference. As I have not been in touch with local affairs on account of my ill health, I do not know what conference it is that you are coming to preside over. I hope we shall be able to meet when you come here

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

Mian Iftikhar-ud-Din
Punjab Provincial Congress Committee
Bradlaugh Hall
Lahore.

113. *To Dr. Gopichand Bhargava*

Sadaquat Ashram
Patna
July 28, 1941

My dear Dr. Gopichand,

Many thanks for your letter dated the 19th July. I arrived here on the 29th June after visiting Dacca and fell ill on the same day. Since then I have been lying ill with my old trouble, with the break of a few days when it seemed I would get well but unfortunately had a setback. Slight rise in temperature and cough and asthma have been there for nearly one month. I have not been able to attend to any work.

Your suggestion regarding the members of the Assembly has to be considered by Mahatmaji and Acharya Kripalani also and I am afraid I cannot give any instructions without consultation with them. I do not know when I shall be at Wardha to have this consultation. Kindly write to Kripalaniji also.

I am glad to learn that Peace Committees have been organised in many places in the Punjab and so far have proved satisfactory. I think these Committees can carry on propaganda in favour of creating good atmosphere. They may also take up any local questions which may be apprehended to end in trouble at any place and settle them there. I do not know if you could succeed in having a Peace

Brigade there. There are communal organisations in existence which do not altogether eschew violence and with all our professions our organisation will also be considered to be one like the existing ones. I would therefore suggest that in your Province you had better wait for some time and strengthen the Peace Committee before embarking upon the establishment of a Peace Brigade. We have been in this Province trying to establish Shanti Dal or Peace Brigade and they have been established in several districts but unfortunately my ill health has not permitted me to do anything practical since my arrival here.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

114. To J.B. Kripalani

Sadaquat Ashram
Patna
July 28, 1941

My dear Kripalaniji,

I have just received your letter dated the 25th July 1941. I have not been keeping well. Since the day I arrived here, that is, the 29th June, I have been ill. For a few days it seemed I was free from trouble but fever and cough reappeared and they continue still. Temperature is low, varying between 98 and 99 but never touching the normal which in my case is 97.4. Cough and asthma are better now. I am not able to do any work but I am not also prostrated. Time hangs very heavy. Local doctors are doing their best. It is difficult to say when I can come to Wardha although Babu wants me there soon and I would myself like to be there.

The question of the local bodies is in a state of confusion. I am thoroughly disgusted with the affairs in my Province but I have not been able to meet such of my co-workers as are available, and after discussing all the pros and cons take a decision in the matter. I am inclined therefore in favour of withdrawing all our members from local bodies in this Province. As soon as I feel a little better, I propose to discuss this with co-workers here. Most of our leading people—members of the A.I.C.C., P.C.C., etc.—would be coming out between the 27th August and 10th of September, as most of them courted imprisonment within a few days of each other and were given a uniform sentence. It has been suggested that I should await their releases and take a decisive action in regard to local bodies after meeting them. I am not sure if I can do that but it depends on my health.

I do not know what friend went to see you to request you to preside over a conference at Gaya. I am not aware that any conference is going to be held at Gaya. But there was going to be held a conference at Nawada, a sub-divisional town in the district of Gaya. I understand that someone had come here during my

illness and was advised not to approach me on account of my ill health. I shall make inquiries and let you know.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

Sj. J.B. Kripalani
General Secretary
A.I.C.C., Sevagram
Wardha.

115. *From A.V. Thakkar*

HARIJAN SEVAK SANGH

Camp: Nibaran Ashram
Ranchi
July 31, 1941

My dear Rajendra Babu,

Mathura Babu might have related to you what we were able to see and do at Gumla and plan out the work for Narayanji from the fund that is earmarked for his work. From the 1st October next, he will take half a dozen workers for training for 3 months, and from 1st January next, he will open 6 new centres where Khadi work and L.P. School with a chest for medical work will be started. I am enclosing a copy of the scheme for your information.

You will be able to see that the amount provided for 12 months beginning from 1st October '41 will be Rs. 1,690. Therefore, we should secure some money during the next cold weather for the second year's (1942-43) work and also for any future expansion that may take place. I must say that I am satisfied with the way in which Narayanji is conducting his work.

I hope you have now completely recovered from the boil on your hand and that there is no temperature. I will be on this side, i.e. in Ranchi, up to the 6th August and will be leaving for Delhi on the morning of 7th August.

With best regards,

Yours sincerely,
A.V. Thakkar

P.S. I have suggested to Narayanji to consider the advisability of holding a Conference of Aborigines in the west of Ranchi district sometime in 1942 for the purpose of spreading Khadi, education and reform amongst them (under Hindu influence) *on a large scale*. This should be presided over by a man of your eminence and high position. Kindly let me know what you think of this idea.

A.V. Thakkar

Enclosure not included.

116. *From Ramdas Pantulu*

HARIJAN SEVAK SANGH
(Andhra Provincial Board, Madras)

Farhat Bagh
Mylapore

My dear Rajendra Prasad,

I desire to acknowledge with thanks your letter dated the 26th July '41. It is very kind of you to have allotted a sum of Rs.1,000 for the Andhra Provincial Harijan Sevak Sangh, out of the sum of Rs.2,500 placed at your disposal by Mr. Shantikumar Narottam Morarjee of Bombay. The Andhra Harijan Sevak Sangh, that is to say, our provincial organisation, has twelve district committees. We conduct 28 hostels for boys and girls in this area.

In accordance with your suggestion, the Vizag District Committee will be given special preference with particular reference to its work among the tribes in Agency Tracts, which is different from Sri Mandeswara Sarma's work for which you have separately allotted Rs.250 and also to Srikrishnasram Harijan Industrial School, Guntur—the Industrial School mentioned by you—which is under the immediate supervision and care of our respected friend Desa Bhakta Konda Venkatappayya. The Committees of Bellary and Anantapur districts also deserve special consideration. It is a famine area and our workers are not able to collect locally. So I would like to allot some portion for them also.

Our Provincial Board has been helping some Harijan boys with small scholarships, particularly for industrial education such as training in leather work, carpentry, etc. I believe that some portion of the grant may be utilised in helping such deserving students. Of course, I shall keep Mr. Thakkar in touch with the proposed distribution of the fund of Rs.1,000 that will be paid to us.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,
Ramdas Pantulu

117. *To J.B. Kripalani*

Sadaquat Ashram
Patna
August 1, 1941

My dear Kripalaniji,

I have met Mr. Khalid from Gaya today. As I had suspected, they have approached you to preside over the Conference at Nawada in the district of

Gaya. They have made arrangements for it and it has created local enthusiasm. Many Mussalmans have also joined the Reception Committee which is somewhat unusual in these days. It is therefore desirable to have the Conference. Postponing or cancelling it will cause disappointment. Your presence will help in creating life in the district. I know that it means a long journey and also your absence from Wardha where Bapu needs you, but I might also get an opportunity of meeting you as you might take the opportunity of passing through Patna. I am still more or less in the same condition in which I was when I wrote to you last.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

118. *From J.B. Kripalani*

Wardha
August 2, 1941

RAJENDRA PRASAD
CARE CONGRESS
PATNA

ENGAGED TENTH TO SEVENTEENTH CAN ATTEND CONFERENCE EIGHTH OR EIGHTEENTH

KRIPALANI

119. *From J.B. Kripalani*

ALL INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE

Sevagram
August 4, 1941

My dear Rajendra Babu,

As soon as I received your telegram I sent the following wire:

ENGAGED TENTH TO SEVENTEENTH CAN ATTEND CONFERENCE EIGHTH OR EIGHTEENTH

At the same time I sent the following wire to Mr. Khalid at Gaya:

RAJENDRABABUS WIRE STOP ENGAGED TENTH TO SEVENTEENTH CAN ATTEND EIGHTH OR EIGHTEENTH WIRE

I have received no answer either from you or from him. I am awaiting a message from either of you. If it comes in time I propose to meet you at Patna before I

attend the Conference.

We here are all anxious about your health. I hope you will soon be your normal self. With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
J.B. Kripalani

Dr. Rajendra Prasad
Dighaghat
Patna.

120. *From V. Raghaviah*

ALL INDIA CRIMINAL TRIBES' ASSOCIATION

Nellore
August 5, 1941

Dear Sri Rajen Babu,

Let me express to you my grateful thanks for the help of Rs.250 Sri Thakkar Bapa has promised me for my (Criminal Tribes) hostel containing 20 boys out of the fund you have provided from Sri Morarjee's gift.

Awaiting a line of blessing from you for the improvement of our hostel.

Yours sincerely,
V. Raghaviah

121. *From J.B. Kripalani*

ALL INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE

Swaraj Bhawan
Allahabad
August 7, 1941

My dear Rajendra Prasad Babu,

The Gaya people bungled a little. When Mr. Khalid saw me here I told him I must get a word from you before I could consent to open a conference these days. As soon as he returned from here he ought to have seen you. As a matter of fact he said he had consulted you and you had expressed your approval. Only you thought as I was travelling a letter may not catch me unless it was definitely known where I was. He therefore, as soon as he learnt that I was at Allahabad,

got an engagement by wire from me and came. All this, as was plain from your letters, was not true. Anyway, after returning from home he should have hurried to meet you and inform me. Instead I enquired from you about the Conference when I reached Wardha and your reply was that nobody had approached you and that you would let us know later more definitely. Even before I got your letter I had consented to the annual meeting of the Gandhi Ashram at Rauwar for the 10th when your wire came that the Conference was fixed for the 10th. I wired to Bapu and you that either 8th or 18th would suit me. Gaya took 2 days to wire back that all arrangements were made for the 10th. I wired immediately that instead the 9th may be fixed. This I thought would not be difficult specially when I had seen no announcement of the proposed Conference in the *Searchlight*. This wire was not replied to even up to the morning of 6th. I therefore decided to start whether the Conference was on the 9th or the 10th for I wanted to meet you before going there and I wanted to start from home this morning and reach there tomorrow morning. I got a wire today redirected from Wardha that Gaya is agreeable to 18th instead of the 9th. I am therefore postponing my visit to you. I have wired to Gaya accepting 18th. I shall try to meet you before the Conference but if I am detained I shall reach Gaya by some train by the 18th morning and then after the Conference meet you.

Everything at Sewagram was going on as usual. Bapu was in health and good cheer. He said he had never felt so peaceful in the midst of a struggle that even the communal trouble was not agitating him any more. He had faith that things will shape themselves quite nicely for the Congress and country. This he told me when I asked him if he wanted me to emphasise anything particular in the Conference.

I hope now you are better.

With pranams,

Yours sincerely,
J.B. Kripalani

122. *To J.B. Kripalani*

Sadaquat Ashram
Patna
August 8, 1941

My dear Kripalaniji,

Your letter dated the 4th August 1941.

As soon as I received your telegram I had the message conveyed on telephone to Gaya friends and thought that they would communicate with you direct. Subsequently I wrote a letter to them asking them to spare you if possible but it seems from newspapers that they have finally fixed up things and you would be coming on the 18th. I wish to meet you so that I may keep myself posted.

I read a telegram in the papers some days ago to the effect that 40 C.D. prisoners from the Naini Jail had written to Bapu to consider the situation in the country and revise the Congress programme. But the same telegram mentioned that Maulana Azad and Dr. Katju were not signatories to the letter. Today I find from the *Hindusthan Standard* that there is a confirmation of the previous news with the addition that both Maulana Azad and Dr. Katju are also signatories to the letter. I find also that you have had an interview with Maulana Saheb. All this seems to me to be very intriguing and I would like to have details from you. The ground suggested in that letter for revising the Congress policy, mainly the fact that Russia is now also included among belligerents, seems to me to be wholly irrelevant. Our position was not based on the non-participation in the war by Russia and attack on Russia does not appear to me to alter the situation in any way.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

123. To V. Raghaviah

Sadaquat Ashram
Patna
August 10, 1941

Dear Mr. Raghaviah,

Many thanks for your letter of the 5th August 1941. I am interested in the work amongst Backward and Criminal Tribes and I am so glad that it has been possible for Thakkar Bapa to make even a small contribution out of this fund of Shri Shantikumarji. I will forward to you the amount by the address you send me.

I am not keeping good health. I hope you are well.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

Shri V. Raghaviah, B.A., B.L.
All India Criminal Tribes Association
Nellore.

124. To A.V. Thakkar

Sadaquat Ashram
Patna
August 11, 1941

My dear Thakkar Bapa,

Many thanks for your letter dated 31-7-41 from Ranchi. Unfortunately my health has gone from bad to worse and during the last 3 or 4 days I have had bad asthma. I have noted the programme of work and the budget which you have framed. I agree that it will be necessary to raise more funds and subject to my health

I shall be ready to do what I could. This time I had a windfall. We have managed to carry on without any special efforts.

I am glad you have decided to earmark the amount set apart for Harijans for welfare work amongst them. I am also very much pleased to learn that you are satisfied with the work of Narayanji.

As regards the suggested Conference of the aborigines to be held in the year 1942 I think propaganda amongst them in advance will be necessary to make the Conference a success. Any Conference organised by our workers will naturally be compared with Conferences organised by Jaipal Singh and unless our workers there can assure us of a successful session, we might wait for some time before deciding upon such a conference. Narayanji, Kshitish Babu and Brahmachari Ram Raksh will be busy with their institutions and may not get time for propaganda. Besides, the Conference at once becomes a sort of political demonstration and may detract from the constructive work which is just in its beginning stage. Perhaps Mr. Theblay Umraon might organise the Conference. I have a feeling that our constructive work will suffer if it gets mixed up with political demonstration. While our Conference may not be intended to be political, our detractors would condemn it as such. These are some of the points which strike me regarding the desirability of having a conference so soon after the commencement of our constructive work. I am placing them before you for your consideration and if it is decided that it is desirable to have a conference, then necessary preparation by way of propaganda etc. will have to be made well in advance. As regards the Presidentship, we shall have to consider whether an out-and-out politician like me would be a suitable person. That would give additional ground for attack.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

Shri A.V. Thakkar
All India Harijan Sevak Sangh
Kingsway, Delhi.

125 From Mian Ifukhar-ud-Din

PUNJAB PROVINCIAL CONGRESS COMMITTEE

Bradlaugh Hall
Lahore
August 12, 1941

My dear Babuji,

I thank you for your letter which, in spite of your illness, you were kind enough to write to me. I hope you are better now. I am venturing to write again for advice

on certain matters.

Firstly, I am writing to ask you as to what disciplinary action you advise me to take against the members of the local bodies who have not resigned from their membership in spite of our repeated instructions. I might mention that we did not exempt anyone. A majority of the members have actually resigned, but there are about fifty who have not. There are others who sent in their resignations and then have withdrawn from the Deputy Commissioner's office. Please give your advice.

The second point is about Dr. Satyapal again. As you know he sent in his resignation from the four-anna membership and asked me to let him know the procedure for resigning from the Punjab Legislative Assembly to which he was elected on Congress ticket. I am again enclosing herewith a copy of the letter he sent to me and that of the letter I sent in reply.* I have not received any answer from him to my letter. What steps am I to take against him if the resignation does not arrive within the next week or two?

Thirdly, two Assembly seats have been vacated in this Province (one on account of the death of a Sikh member and the other on account of the insolvency of a Muslim member). In case we get candidates for the Sikh seat are we permitted to participate in the contest or not? There is no possibility of setting a Muslim candidate and in the case of the Sikh also the likelihood is small as the Akalis are fighting independently of the Congress.

My work regarding the Peace Committees has been progressing rather well—far above my expectations. I have succeeded in forming District Committees in about 11 districts in the Province and in this almost everywhere every party has cooperated. I hope to do other districts within the next few weeks.

I was surprised to read in your letter about my visit to Bihar. Actually when the students' Secretary approached me I wrote to say that it will not be possible (on account of my work in this Province) to go. In any case you would have known beforehand if I intended accepting the invitation.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
M. Iftikhar-ud-Din

Babu Rajendra Prasadji
Sadaquat Ashram
Patna.

*See enclosures 1 and 2 to letter dated 25 July 1941 from Mian Iftikhar-ud-Din to Rajendra Prasad.

126. *From J.B. Kripalani*

Akbarpur
August 16, 1941

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I had your last letter here at Akbarpur. We have a meeting of the Executive of the Gandhi Ashram. It is its annual meeting where we review the work of the last

year and chalk out programmes and pass budget for the next. Most of the workers assemble. Therefore this meeting takes about 7 days.

I propose to leave this place for Gaya tomorrow noon by the Dehradoon Express, which reaches there at 20.20 Rly. time. I have informed Mr. Khalid.

You must have read my contradiction about the letter supposed to have been written from Naini Jail. There was no truth in the report. I saw Maulana Sahib because I happened to be at Allahabad and his Secretary was having his interview that day. *** we talked about Sind for some Congress members of the Sind Assembly have written to Bapu about [organising] withdrawal from the Assembly. Bapu while he is not quite clear about local bodies is quite clear that Congressmen in minority Provinces must withdraw from the Assemblies because there governments are cooperating in war effort. So far as Sind goes Bapu thinks he must respect the wishes of Maulana Sahib. The latter is emphatically of the view that Allahbaksh must be fully supported by Congressmen and the latter must not withdraw and nothing has happened since which could shake the position he took up when he offered support to Allahbaksh. Maulana thinks any withdrawal would amount to breaking with Allahbaksh.

I propose to be there after the Conference. I think they have kept a two-day programme.

More in person

With pranams,

Yours sincerely,
J.B. Kripalani

***Illegible

127. *From V. Raghaviah*

ALL INDIA CRIMINAL TRIBES ASSOCIATION

Nellore

Andhra

August 17, 1941

Dear Shri Rajenbabu,

Your very kind letter of 10-8-41. The Criminal Tribes really owe a great debt to you. You can send the contribution of Rs.250 sanctioned from Sri Morarjee's fund to the following address:

V. Raghaviah, B.A., B.L.

Nellore

M.S.M. Rly.

Madras Presidency.

I am enclosing the latest photo of our hostel boys. All of them are Enadi boys (Criminal Tribe with a population of 1½ lakhs in my district only).

Out of [Rs.]250 I request your permission to spend [Rs.]50 for purchasing 25 Kisan Charkhas for Enadi women whom I have taught spinning. I have trained 100 women (Enadis, in past 1½ months) after I came from jail in June '41 but could supply only 38 wheels. The rest Rs.200 I would use for the hostel.

Kindly instruct me about it.

With my best regards,

Yours sincerely,
V. Raghaviah

128. *From Shyamlal*

HARIJAN SEVAK SANGH

Kingsway
Delhi
August 18, 1941

Pujya Rajendra Babu,

This is to recall your attention to the letter dated Patna the 26th July to Hon'ble Shri V. Ramdas Pantulu, President of the Andhra H.S. Sangh, re the sum of Rs.2,500 placed at your disposal by Shri Shantikumar N. Morarjee of the Scindia Steam Navigation Company, Bombay, for work in Andhra Desh. At the suggestion of Thakkar Bapa you were kind enough to earmark Rs.250 each, total Rs.500, for the work (1) among the aborigines of Vizag Highlands by Shri Mandeswara Sarma, and (2) among the Yenadis of Nellore district by Shri V. Raghaviah, a member of the A.I.C.C.

Yenadis are both a criminal and hill tribe in Andhra Desh and Shri V. Raghaviah has been doing constructive work among them by introduction of education and spinning among them. He is also the Secretary of the A.I. Criminal Tribes Conference. May I request that the sum of Rs.500 sanctioned by you for the work of Messrs. Mandeswara Sarma and V. Raghaviah be sent to this office by a cheque in favour of the Harijan Sevak Sangh? -

I hope your health is now better.

Yours respectfully,
Shyamlal

Shri Rajendra Prasad
Sadaquat Ashram
Patna.

Copies to:

1. Shri Thakkar Bapa, Bombay.
2. Shri V Raghaviah. I have received the July accounts and as soon as money is received from Rajendra Babu I will arrange to remit the first instalment of the grant.

129 *To Shyamlal*

Sadaquat Ashram
Patna
August 23, 1941

My dear Shyamlal,

Your letter No. 4231 dated the 18th August 1941 to hand.

As regards the amount of Rs.2,500 placed at my disposal by Shri Shantikumar for Andhra Desh I have had correspondence with Sri Ramdas Pantulu, Hindi Prachar Sabha, and Mr V. Raghaviah. It was decided in consultation with Thakkar Bapa while he was here that the amount should be distributed as follows.

Hindi Prachar Sabha for work in Andhra Desh	Rs.1,000
Harijan Sevak Sangh, Andhra Branch	Rs.1,000
To Sj. Mandeswara Sarma for work among aborigines	Rs 250
To Mr V. Raghaviah for work amongst the Yenadis	Rs.250
	<hr/>
	Rs.2,500

After hearing from the parties concerned I have already sent Rs.1,000 to Sj. Ramdas Pantulu and Rs.250 to Sj. V. Raghaviah. I have received a letter from Sj. Satyanarayan of Hindi Prachar Sabha and will remit Rs 1,000 to him. I have not however got the address of Mr. Mandeswara Sarma, nor have I heard anything from him, and so that amount has not been remitted. I do not know if it would be worth while remitting Rs.250 to you when the rest has been distributed by me from here. Kindly inform Thakkar Bapa accordingly.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

Sj. Shyamlal
Harijan Sevak Sangh
Kingsway, Delhi.

130. *From D.K. Gosavi*

MAHARASHTRA PROVINCIAL CONGRESS COMMITTEE

Poona

August 24, 1941

Revered Rajendra Babu,

I have been long desiring to see you but could find no opportunity so far. I expected to see you at Wardha sometime but for a long interval you had not been able to visit Wardha even. I hope you are keeping good health.

Workers in Maharashtra are very eager to have you here among them. I, therefore, request you to spend some two or three days here with us in Poona. I shall feel obliged if you can come over to Poona on the second of October for Gandhi Jayanti celebrations.

Maharashtra has resolved (1) to collect Rs.7,200, (2) to collect 2 crore yards of hand-spun yarn, and (3) to enroll at least 720 Wastra-Swavlambi spinners. It is strongly hoped that this programme will be more than fulfilled and your presence on the occasion will be a source of inspiration and encouragement. I have sent this invitation much in advance in order to suit your convenience.

Waiting for a favourable reply.

Yours sincerely,

D.K. Gosavi

President

Maharashtra Provincial Congress Committee

131. *From Sir Shadi Lal*

'Anar Bhawan'
Charleville Road
Mussoorie
August 29, 1941

Dear Dr. Rajendra Prasad,

I have been requested by the leading Hindus of the Punjab to get into the Indian Legislative Assembly. I can be a member of the Assembly if a sitting member resigns his seat, and I get that seat by election.

There is in the Punjab a Hindu member of the Assembly, who may be induced to resign his seat. But he thinks that he can resign only if a Congress candidate does not come forward and take his seat. He has no objection if I stand for election to that seat.

The question is whether the Congress would put forward a candidate to

contest that seat.

I have discussed the matter with Dr. Gopichand Bhargava who is the leader of the Congress in the Punjab. But he says that he has no authority to decide the matter himself, but that it can be decided by you and S. Patel of Bombay.

Dr. Gopichand is of the opinion that, in view of the services rendered by me to the Congress in the Punjab, the Congress should not put forward a candidate against me. Dr. Gopichand also said that he would advise you and S. Patel that Congress should not put forward against me a candidate in the election.

I am writing this letter to you in order to inform you that the Hindus of the Punjab are anxious that I should become a member of the Indian Legislative Assembly, and that I will be of considerable help to the Hindus in various matters. One of the matters which will soon come up before the Assembly is the question of amending the Hindu Law for which a Committee called the Hindu Law Committee are writing memoranda making suggestions for amending the Hindu law of inheritance. The Hindus of the Punjab feel keenly on the subject of amending the Hindu law on the succession by the widow to the estate of her husband, or by the daughter to the estate of her father.

I trust that you will carefully consider this question, and will not put me to the trouble of contesting an election.

I may add that if a Congress candidate does not stand against me, the leading Hindus of the Punjab who are anxious that I should be elected to the Indian Legislative Assembly have decided to write a manifesto to the Hindus of the Punjab not to oppose me in the election, and to allow me to be elected to the Indian Legislative Assembly without contest.

Yours sincerely,
Shadi Lal

Dr. Rajendra Prasad
Sadaquat Ashram
Patna.

132 *From Dr. Gopichand Bhargava*

Lajpatrai Bhawan
Lahore
August 30, 1941

My dear Doctor Sahib,

I am going to give you a trouble. I want to seek your opinion on an important matter. Sir Shadi Lal was Chief Judge of the Lahore High Court. He has now left Lahore and resides in Delhi. When he was Chief Judge, his attitude in political cases was favourable to us. He wanted me to meet him. He told me that he was

approached by leading Hindu Sabhaites to offer himself for a seat in the Central Assembly. Government has appointed a Committee with a Judge of Calcutta High Court to discuss and suggest amendments to Hindu Law. The Committee has started work. They will submit the report and suggestions to the Assembly and Bills will be proposed. Therefore it is suggested that he gets elected to the Central Legislature. He is also desirous to go there. They are approaching Bhai Parmanand to resign and vacate the seat. But before this is done, he wants to know the Congress attitude if there is a vacancy. The vacancy will be created for him. He does not desire that there be a contest between him and the Congress, maybe that Bhaiji will not resign if Congress were going to contest it.

Satyagraha is going on and will be continued. M.L.A.s are not allowed to attend the Session; rather they are expected to be in jail as Satyagrahis. It is doubtful if any man in the Punjab would come forward to contest the seat if vacated and then not attend and go to jail.

Moreover the seat is not in our hands and it is going to be vacated by a non-Congressman for a non-Congressman. Success of a Congressman is also not very sure under the present circumstances.

With these points in view, what is your opinion? Should Congress contest it, if there is a vacancy? Please let me know your opinion and oblige.

With best regards,

Yours sincerely,
Gopichand Bhargava

Babu Rajendra Prasadji
Sadaquat Ashram
Patna.

133. *To Mian Iftikhar-ud-Din*

Sadaquat Ashram
Patna
August 30, 1941

My dear Mian Saheb,

You know at present we are against taking disciplinary action. You can announce that the Congress has withdrawn all its members from the local bodies in the Punjab and such Congressmen as have not resigned their seats remain there not as Congressmen but as individuals. As honourable people they should resign their seats having sought election on Congress tickets. After making this announcement you might note down their names and keep them in your office for future action.

I suppose all the Congress Committees have been dissolved in your Province.

But if there be any Congress Committees which are not yet dissolved and if any of the members of the local bodies be on those Committees, they must be asked to resign. If they refuse, they must be expelled from those Committees.

Dr. Satyapal's resignation from the primary membership of the Congress should be forthwith accepted. His resignation as M.L.A. may be sent through you to the Governor. But it does not matter if it is sent directly to the Governor. If, however, he refuses to resign his seat in the Assembly, you can make a public declaration that as he was elected on Congress ticket it will be honourable for him to resign. If he does not, you cannot do anything.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

134. *To the President, Tamil Nadu Provincial Congress Committee*

Camp Sadaquat Ashram
Patna
August 30, 1941

Dear Sir,

I am sending you herewith an appeal from V. Balasubramanyam sent to us [against] your decision regarding election of the President, Trichy District Board. You will please let me know the facts of the case. If what S. J. V. Balasubramanyam has said is correct, your decision does go against instructions contained in our circular about office-bearers in local bodies. Along with your reply you will please also send this copy of the appeal which I am sending herewith.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

Enclosure not included.

135. *To Dr. Gopichand Bhargava*

Sadaquat Ashram
Patna
September 3, 1941

My dear Dr. Gopichand,

I have received your letter dated the 30th August regarding the suggestion that a seat in the Legislative Assembly which may be vacated by a non-Congress

member for Sir Shadi Lal should not be contested by the Congress. It is obvious that I cannot give an off-hand reply in a matter like this and I shall consult Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel as also the Provincial Congress Committee. I am going to write to Sardar Patel and forward to him a copy of your letter as also a copy of the letter of Sir Shadi Lal which I have received, and I would write to you again.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

Sj. Gopichand Bhargava
Lajpatrai Bhawan
Lahore.

136. *To Sir Shadi Lal*

Sadaquat Ashram
Patna
September 3, 1941

Dear Sir Shadi Lal,

I have received your letter dated the 29th August 1941. Before giving a reply to the question raised in your letter it will be necessary for me to consult Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Punjab Congress Committee. I am writing immediately to Sardar Patel and will write to you again after hearing from him.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

Sir Shadi Lal
Anar Bhawan, Charleville Road
Mussoorie.

137. *To Vallabhbhai Patel*

Sadaquat Ashram
Patna
September 3, 1941

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I will not have troubled you while you are lying ill but a somewhat ticklish question has come up and I would like to have your views on it. I am enclosing copy of a letter received from Dr. Gopichand Bhargava as also copy of Sir Shadi

Lal's letter.* I have written to them that I would reply after consulting you. I think it is necessary to consult the Provincial Congress Committee before giving any reply.

There have been several by-elections in the past and we have not been attaching much importance to them. I do not know what the chances of the Congress candidate would be and whether we shall be able to get a suitable candidate who is financially well off to find funds for the contest. We have made it a point not to undertake any financial responsibility in these by-elections on behalf of the A.I.C.C. If you feel inclined to allow the seat to go uncontested then it may be worthwhile consulting the Provincial Congress Committee, otherwise it is unnecessary to do so. Seeing that the seat is held by a non-Congressman who is to vacate it only if we decide not to contest, I do not personally feel much interested in contesting it. I have a kind of feeling that Sir Shadi Lal may prove better than Bhai Parmanand.

I hope you are improving. I am hoping to reach Wardha by the 8th or 9th. I have had some setback and I am therefore waiting to gather sufficient strength to enable me to undertake the tedious journey to Wardha.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

*See Sir Shadi Lal's letter dated 29 August 1941 and Dr. Gopichand's letter dated 30 August 1941, both addressed to Dr. Rajendra Prasad

138. *From D.K. Gosavi*

MAHARASHTRA PROVINCIAL CONGRESS COMMITTEE

Poona
September 3, 1941

Revered Rajendra Babu,

About a week back I have written to you seeking your consent to come over to Poona on the occasion of the Gandhi Jayanti Celebrations on October 2nd next. I received no reply so far and therefore this is merely as an humble reminder of the same original request. An early reply is solicited.

Yours sincerely,
D.K. Gosavi
President

Maharashtra Provincial Congress Committee

139. *From J.B. Kripalani*

ALL INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE

68 Marine Drive
Bombay
September 5, 1941

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I arrived here this morning and saw Sardar and gave him your message. He gave me your letter of the 3rd and has asked me to write to you about it.

Whether to contest the seat to be vacated in the Punjab for Sir Shadi Lal or to leave it, in both cases it is necessary formally to consult the President of the Punjab P.C.C. Personally Sardar and myself are of your view. We feel that from the point of view of the public, Sir Shadi Lal will be more useful in the Assembly than Bhai Parmanand. For other reasons also, we believe that this seat from the Punjab need not be contested by the Congress.

Mian Iftikhar-ud-Din is at present in Wardha. I have written to him indicating also our view in the matter. I hope and expect that he will agree with us. As soon as I hear from him, I shall write to you.

Sir Shadi Lal has directly also written to Sardar and Sardar has asked me to write to him that you will be disposing of the matter as he is lying ill and not attending to business. As soon as Mian Saheb's opinion is known, you may write both to Gopichand and Sir Shadi Lal.

It appears that you were not in a position to leave Patna either for Allahabad or for Wardha. Seeing the condition of your health I expected as much. I may tell you that I found Allahabad much drier. I think, if you feel like it, you may move to Allahabad and be there for some days and then proceed to Wardha.

Sardar has asked me to send you his greetings. He has left the clinic and is now at his place. He is trying homeopathic treatment.

With pranams,

Yours sincerely,
J.B. Kripalani

140. *From N.N. Sinha*

HARIJAN SEVAK SANGH
(Bihar Provincial Branch)

"Hariparayan Villa"
Bankipore
September 10, 1941

My dear Babu,

Hope you have reached Wardha comfortably and the change is proving the desired effect. Perhaps you remember the Harijan Week celebration. Please issue

an appeal for the observance of the same and send it to me at your earliest convenience. A copy of our usual programmes is sent herewith for your information. I propose that your appeal along with Raja Sahab's be printed and distributed throughout the Province. So please send it at an early date.

Hope to be excused for the trouble.

Yours sincerely,
N.N. Sinha

Enclosure:

(Copy of programme for the celebration of Harijan Week)

Dear Friend,

The period from 24th September to 2nd October is an important landmark in the movement for the removal of untouchability. The "Poona Pact" was signed on 24th September and accepted by the British Government on 26th September. On 30th September 1932, the public meeting representing the Hindu community held under the Presidentship of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, formed the Harijan Sevak Sangh. 2nd October is the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi, the founder of our Sangh, and he will complete his 72nd year on that date.

It is, therefore, in the fitness of things that this time the Harijan Week (really nine days) and Gandhiji's 73rd birthday should be observed with greater enthusiasm and activities in the cause of Harijans than heretofore. I request, therefore, that all the Harijan workers in the country, whether they are residing in large towns or in small villages, will make all proper arrangements beforehand for the due observance of the Week, from 24th September, the day of "Poona Pact", to 2nd October, "Gandhiji's Birthday". You will, I am sure, arrange for the following items in your midst and in all the areas subordinate to you:

1. Collections of funds for Harijan welfare work by house-to-house visitation, with printed receipts or tickets in hand.
2. Arranging for games and sports, jointly for Harijans and non-Harijans, children as well as adults. Distribution of sweets to Harijan children and prizes to the winners of games in public meetings.
3. Visiting and cleansing of various quarters occupied by Harijans, specially Sweepers' and Domes' localities.
4. Holding of public meetings jointly for caste Hindus and Harijans and also of Harijans in Harijan quarters.
5. Emphasising the necessity of temple-entry and enjoyment of civic rights to Harijans.
6. Enlisting associates and helpers of the Harijan causes.

I hope that you will make early and detailed arrangement for observing the period mentioned above with due serenity and enthusiasm and in as wide a circle as you can.

141. *To R. Mandeswara Sarma*

Bajajwadi
Wardha
September 12, 1941

Dear Shri Mandeswara Sarma,

I am glad to receive your letter dated the 6th September and to know the nature of work that is being done among Hill Tribes by you. I am enclosing a cheque for Rs.250 which I hope you will find in order.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

Sj. R. Mandeswara Sarma
The Andhra Provincial Zamin Ryots' Association
Hill Tribes Section
Kovvur (W. Godavari).

142. *To Sir Shadi Lal*

Bajajwadi
Wardha
September 15, 1941

Dear Sir Shadi Lal,

Please refer to your letter dated the 29th August and my reply thereto dated the 3rd September. I have since consulted Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and the President of the Punjab Provincial Congress Committee. As the seat is going to be particularly vacated for you and is not at present held by anyone elected on a Congress ticket, we do not think it advisable to set up a Congress candidate in the by-election. Besides, having withdrawn from the Assembly we are not taking much interest in by-elections. You may therefore ask Bhai Parmanand to vacate his seat for you. We shall not contest it on behalf of the Congress.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

Sir Shadi Lal
Anar Bhawan, Charleville Road
Mussoorie.

Copy forwarded to Dr. Gopichand Bhargava, for information.

Rajendra Prasad

143. *From B.N. Udasi*

VIDARBHA PROVINCIAL CONGRESS COMMITTEE

Rajasthan Bhawan
Akola
September 15, 1941

Dear Babuji,

According to the letter of Shri Kishorelalbhai, Shri Gopalrao Khedkar, President, Vidarbha Provincial Congress Committee, is coming to see Mahatmaji tomorrow, the 16th of September. He will see Gandhiji after 4-30 as per suggestion of Shri Mashruwala. He will see you between 1 and 2 p.m. tomorrow. Will you kindly allot that time to Mr. Khedkar who wants to see you before he sees M. Gandhi?

Yours faithfully,
B.N. Udasi
Office Secretary

Babu Rajendra Prasad
Sevagram.

144. *From S.R. Srinivasa Tatachari*

S A. DISTRICT CONGRESS COMMITTEE

Cuddalore N.T.
September 28, 1941

Revered Babuji,

We have arranged according to your Press statement to hold district, taluk and firka conferences throughout the district. The first of such conferences, the Second Cuddalore Taluk Conference, will take place on 4th October 1941 in a village under the [Presidentship] of Mr. V.M. Ubayedulla Sahib, President of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee.

Dr. T.S.S. Rajan, ex-Minister of the Government of Madras, has consented to open the Conference. Since we are having the Conference at a critical period in the history of our fight for freedom, I request you to send a message to the Conference and offer your blessings.

Yours very sincerely,
S.R. Srinivasa Tatachari
Secretary, Reception Committee

145. *From A. V. Thakkar*

HARIJAN SEVAK SANGH
(Head Office: Delhi)

Camp: Peelamedu
Coimbatore
September 30, 1941

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I send you herewith copy of a letter from Shri Jagjivan Ram, dated Patna the 20th instant. I will be coming to Wardha on the 4th of October by the G T. Express from Madras and will stay in Sevagram one full day. At that time I will meet you and discuss with you the letter of Jagjivan Ram.

I hope your health is all right now and that you are having good rest in Wardha.

I have been touring in Madras Presidency since the 30th of August and have come to the end of it. I will be reaching Madras tomorrow morning and after a couple of days' stay there, I will come to Wardha.

With best regards,

I am,
Yours sincerely,
A. V. Thakkar

Dr. Rajendra Prasad
Bajajwadi
Wardha.

Enclosure:

(Copy of letter from Jagjivan Ram to A. V. Thakkar)

Congress Nagar
Kadamkuan P.O
Patna
September 20, 1941

Revered Bapa,

I was released on the 10th inst. after completing the full term of my imprisonment. I reached Arrah on the 11th inst. and found my only son seriously ill. I was so much perturbed and busy that I could not write to you earlier. I am so sorry for the delay and hope to be excused.

I am writing this letter to you after a period of more than nine months but this long period behind the prison bars has practically nothing to make a mention of.

On the whole I had a good time but for the latter part when my old trouble of piles relapsed and made me a victim of indifferent health. I have not as yet recouped my health. Then domestic and public cares and troubles are to be faced now.

I have so many things to talk to you regarding the various problems of the Depressed Classes not only of my Province but of the country. These all are, of course, not concerning the work [or] policy of the H.S.S. but the social, economic and political problems of the Depressed Classes from their point of view. Your advice and guidance in these matters are urgently required at this critical moment when various disruptive forces are at work in the country. I know full well that you do not mingle in politics but as one who has entirely identified himself with the interests of the Harijans, and as one who has silently devoted his whole life to that cause, you are in a supremely unique position by dint of your experience to help us (nationalist element among the Depressed Classes) in arriving at a clear-cut policy but suited to our interest as well as that of the country and therefore we look up to you for advice and guidance in this matter. Then there are other points regarding the work in my own Province which also are to be discussed.

With this end in view I have been strongly thinking of paying my respects to you at your convenience at Delhi as early as possible. But my pecuniary circumstances do not permit me to venture a journey to Delhi. Rajendra Babu being away to Wardha, my difficulty does not seem to be solved. I do not see a way to come to Delhi. You can call me to Delhi if you so condescend.

A few lines of blessing in reply are earnestly prayed for. With my respectful pranams,

Obediently yours,
Jagivan Ram

Sjt A.V Thakkar
General Secretary
Harijan Sevak Sangh
Delhi.

146 *From J.B. Kripalani*

Bombay
October 7, 1941

My dear Rajendra Babu,

The programme in Gujarat was being changed to the 6th. I therefore came here this morning. Sardar was leaving this evening for Nasik and as he had no time to talk to me he wants me to accompany him there and from there to go to Wardha. I met Jawaharlalji just now. He said I was expected there today. I am sorry I am delayed. Hope if Sardar does not mind I shall be there day after.

Jawaharlalji says that you are much better. I am glad. If I am immediately wanted you may wire to me at Nasik C/o Birla House.

Love.

Yours ever,
J.B. Kripalani

147. *To J.B. Kripalani*

Bajajwadi
Wardha
October 8, 1941

My dear Kripalaniji,

Some of the letters which were personally addressed to you or which I could not deal with were posted to Nasik today. I hope you will get them and deal with them.

I had a talk with Gopabandhu Babu after our telephonic conversation. He told me that one S.J. Jagannath Das who was formerly with Godavaris Misra but now has broken away from him has control over two members who had signed a public statement with Godavaris. Godavaris Misra and his party are also not quite sure about these two members and are therefore keeping them in hiding if not in confinement somewhere. Gopa Babu thinks that a visit to Orissa by a responsible person from the A.I.C.C. would be helpful in keeping waverers in order and even getting back these members through the help of S.J. Jagannath Das. You know Sadik Ali has been there recently and must have reached Calcutta by now. I am asking him for details and we can decide the question when you are here.

I have received a telegram from Bhulabhai informing me that he is meeting Messrs. Satyamurti and Asaf Ali on the 12th and that he has also invited S.J. Satyanarayan Sinha to discuss the question of attendance by Congress members during the next session for preserving their seats.

I am well. Please convey my pranams to Vallabhbhai.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

S.J. J.B. Kripalani
Birla House
Nasik Road.

148. *From J.B. Kripalani*

Nasik Road
October 10, 1941

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I had the post that you kindly redirected here as also your letter of the 9th. Thanks.

I propose to leave this place tomorrow evening by the Calcutta Mail and be there on the 12th morning. I have completely rested myself and enjoyed my stay here. Sardar is feeling better though his particular complaint remains. However he is free from the worry of Bombay. He is thinking of coming there when Rajaji goes there.

He is unwilling to leave me as he would be alone here. But I have told him that I must be there after this absence. He has asked me to send his pranams. I showed him your letter.

With my pranams,

Yours sincerely,
J.B. Kripalani

149. *From the President, Bengal Provincial Congress Committee*

BENGAL PROVINCIAL CONGRESS COMMITTEE

Calcutta
October 18, 1941

This is to inform you that Sd. Amar Krishna Ghose, Member, A.I.C.C., has been deputed by me to discuss with you certain matters regarding the Congress affairs in Bengal.

Yours sincerely,
(Sd.)
President

Dr. Rajendra Prasad
Sevagram
Wardha, C.P.

150. *From Dr. B. Pattabhi Sitaraman*

October 20, 1941

Dear Rajendra Prasad,

1. With reference to my enquiry about a letter I sent, which reached at Madras office (Andhra), I herewith send you the reference. No. I is Venkataraju's letter and No. II is your reply.

2. I have met Mr. Venkataraju, Agent, A.P.C.C., here at the Rly. Station. There is something which he feels he has to say in regard to the telegram which

you showed me at Sevagram from Mr. T. Prakasam and on which you asked my opinion. Perhaps you will get full information if you send for him. So if you approve of the idea, you can send a telegram to him to the address:

Mr. Venkataraju
Tenali.

When he meets you, he may be able to enlighten you on the subject which is a delicate one just at this juncture.

Yours sincerely,
B. Pattabhi Sitaraman

P.S. When I was at Wardha Mr. Venkataraju wired to me on 19th asking me to wire to him my programme. I wrote to him I would start on the 21st or 22nd. He came here to meet me yesterday and today from Tenali.

B. Pattabhi Sitaraman

Enclosure 1:

(Copy of letter from Venkataraju, President, Andhra Provincial Congress Committee, to the General Secretary, A.I.C.C.)

ANDHRA PROVINCIAL CONGRESS COMMITTEE

Madras
October 6, 1941

Sub: Satyagraha—appointment of Provincial Congress Agent proposed—
permission offering Satyagraha requested.

Dear Sir,

Sri T. Prakasam who was the only elected President of this Congress Committee had offered Satyagraha on 26.11.41 and been released this morning on the expiry of his term of imprisonment. I request you to permit me to hand over charges of the P.C.C. to Sri T. Prakasam.

I request you further to secure me permission of Gandhiji to offer Satyagraha at an early date.

Yours sincerely,
Venkataraju
President

General Secretary
All India Congress Committee
Wardha.

Enclosure 2:

(Copy of letter from Rajendra Prasad to the President, Andhra Provincial Congress Committee)

Sevagram
Wardha
October 8, 1941

Dear Friend,

Your letter asking for permission to hand over charge to Shri T. Prakasam, the duly elected President of the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee, has been received. As you know, the general policy declared by Mahatma Gandhi is that Satyagrahis released from jail should offer Satyagraha again. It would therefore serve no useful purpose to hand over the charge to Shri T. Prakasam if he is going to court arrest again. It is therefore a matter in which Shri Prakasam is to be consulted. If, for any reason, he is going to remain out for any considerable time, the question will arise, and Mahatma Gandhi may then be consulted.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

The President
Andhra Provincial Congress Committee
Madras.

151. *From Raja Narendra Nath*

Lahore
October 28, 1941

DR RAJENDRA PRASAD
DIGHAGHAT
PATNA

IF CONGRESS POLICY IS ABSENTEEISM FROM ASSEMBLY HAS USELESS UNJUST
TO ELECTORATE PUTTING UP CANDIDATE FOR SATYAPAL

RAJA NARENDRA NATH

157. *To Sriram Sharma*

November 29, 1941

SRIRAM SHARMA
JHAJJARLETTER RECEIVED DISCUSSION NECESSARY ASKING MIAN IFTIKHARUDDIN
GOPICHAND COME HERE WITH PARTY REPRESENTATIVES

RAJENDRA PRASAD

158. *To Dr. Gopichand Bhargava and Mian Iftikhar-ud-Din*

November 29, 1941

(1) GOPICHAND BHARGAVA
LAJPATRAI HALL
LAHORE(2) MIAN IFTIKHARUDDIN
21 AIKMAN ROAD
LAHOREASSEMBLY MEMBERS WANT PERMISSION ATTEND SESSION DISCUSSION
NECESSARY PLEASE COME WITH PARTY REPRESENTATIVES

RAJENDRA PRASAD

159. *From Dr. Gopichand Bhargava*New Delhi
December 4, 1941DR RAJENDRA PRASAD
WARDHALEAVING WITH ASSEMBLY REPRESENTATIVES GRAND TRUNK EVENING WIRE
FRESH INSTRUCTIONS IF ANYGOPICHAND
CARE TEJ160. *To Mian Abdul Aziz*Wardha
December 4, 1941

Dear Sir,

I have received your letter dated 27th November. The matter has been receiving our attention and I have asked the President of the Provincial Congress Committee and representatives of the parties to meet me in this connection

before taking any decision. You know that the decision in regard to the Punjab was taken by the President after a visit to the Province, discussion with the workers and study of the local situation. It is therefore necessary to go into the matter fully before we alter it. I am expecting the Punjab friends to come here in a day or two and we shall fully discuss the whole matter and then come to a decision.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

Mian Abdul Aziz
Bar-at-law
Outside Yakki Gate
Lahore.

161. *To Binodanand Jha*

Swaraj Ashram
Bardoli
December 12, 1941

My dear Binoda Babu,

I am writing to you separately about the Santhal and Paharia Seva Sangh as you might require the letter to be kept on the file.

I hear that your wife was ill. I do not know how she is now. Anugrah Babu told me that she was improving. I do hope you are free from anxieties now. It is possible that we may have a meeting of the A.I.C.C. early in January. If that is so, then I hope to be able to meet you wherever the meeting will be held. There are so many things about which it is necessary to talk to friends in Bihar. I had to come away in a hurry on account of my ill health when you were all released and I have not been able to go back. I am not at all satisfied with the state of affairs in our Province. The local bodies have really ruined us and I feel that we have gone back by many years. We shall have to do much uphill work to re-establish the high ideals with which we joined this movement some 20 years ago. As I told you all at Patna, I have never felt more dejected and depressed about our Province than during the last 6 or 7 months. I feel it all the more because I am not able to prevent the rot on account of my physical disability. But we can talk about it when we meet. Anugrah Babu and Abdul Bari were here. I have asked Sri Babu also to come. I do not know when he is coming. We shall of course meet at the time of the A.I.C.C. meeting but that is always a crowded time and I do not know if we can get an opportunity of quiet talk.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

162. *To Binodanand Jha*Swaraj Ashram
Bardoli (Surat)

December 12, 1941

My dear Binodanandji,

I received your letter dated 30th November regarding the scheme of work among the Santhals and Paharias of Santhal Parganas. I am glad that the tour of Thakkar Bapa has resulted in this scheme. I can only hope that we shall be able to get some workers who would devote themselves to this work exclusively as contemplated in the scheme. This is a kind of service which we have neglected too long. It will be a great thing if we can start it on good sound lines even at this stage. I have no doubt that under Thakkar Bapa's guidance it will be so worked. As regards the scheme itself there is only one suggestion that I can make at this stage. I know that the Paharias are backward and require more attention but I do not like the idea of binding ourselves in the constitution itself that "in any of the institution Sevaks will try to teach equal number of Santhal and Paharia students". While Paharias may be given preferential advantages, it would not be proper to make this a part of the constitution. It will also be ultimately unfair. I would therefore leave it to the managing committee to give instructions to the workers in this behalf from time to time as occasion arises and not include this in the constitution. I think the aims and objects and methods adopted for obtaining them are comprehensively stated. When the constitution is drafted you will of course take care to include all this in language which may be carefully considered but which will be more or less like what is stated in the scheme sent to me. I do not know if it is contemplated that the Sangh will be registered under the Charitable Societies Act. But that is a matter which may be considered later after some progress has been made.

What are you going to do about funds required for this purpose? You must have discussed this with Thakkar Bapa. Please let me know if you have any plan for collecting funds and what your probable budget for the first year is going to be.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad163. *From the Secretary, Punjab Congress Assembly Party*

PUNJAB CONGRESS ASSEMBLY PARTY

Lajpatrai Bhawan
Lahore
December 20, 1941

Dear Sir,

I am sending herewith a copy of the resolution passed by the Congress Assembly Party at its meeting held at Lahore on December 16, 1941. The

statement of reason for permitting the resumption of parliamentary programme by the Congress Assembly Party is also attached herewith

Yours sincerely,
(Sd.)
Secretary

Dr. Rajendra Prasad.

Enclosure:

(Copy of Resolution passed by the Congress Assembly Party at its meeting held at Lahore on 16 December 1941)

Resolved that for the reasons contained in the statement attached, the Congress Parliamentary Board be requested to kindly permit the Assembly Party in the Punjab to resume its normal functions of the parliamentary programme.

PUNJAB CASE FOR RESUMPTION OF PARLIAMENTARY ACTIVITIES

In passing the resolution regarding the necessity felt by the Punjab Congress Assembly Party, it is perhaps relevant to consider the question of the withdrawal of the Party from the Assembly a year ago at the time of the inauguration of the Satyagraha campaign in Punjab. At that time the President of the Congress, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, while on his way back from Karachi, was present in Lahore for a short time.

For one reason or the other, he decided to call out members of the Party from the Legislative Assembly on the day when Mian Iftikhar-ud-Din was to inaugurate Satyagraha. The Party, discipline bound, naturally obeyed the mandate of the President. At that time when the Party itself considered this problem, it came to the conclusion that since a large majority of the Assembly members had to offer themselves for Satyagraha sooner or later, it was desirable that the remaining members of the Party should stay away from the Assembly. Thus the Party for this definite purpose ceased to function in the legislature, but now when almost all members of the Party, barring those detained as security prisoners, are out of jail, the question of return to the Assembly takes for an instance [sic] which has compelled the Party at its meeting held on the 16th December 1941 to pass a unanimous resolution to the effect that the Opposition should be permitted to function normally.

The reasons which prompt this decision are, to say the least, important from national point of view. The Party would avoid discussion as to the desirability or undesirability of resuming the parliamentary programme but it is certainly necessary that reasons specifically applicable to Punjab should be brought to the notice of the Congress High Command without any further delay.

At the time of the withdrawal, the period of the absence was not stipulated. Nor, it must be made clear, was any general principle regarding absence from the legislatures actually laid down. Apart from the Congress governed Provinces the Congress Opposition continued to function in Sind and has been doing so in other Provinces as well. The Punjab case is not in any way different from Sind. It rather [assumes] national importance as the reactionary elements in the Punjab are much more consolidated than in Sind or any other Province. Sometimes it has been stated that it is useless to continue to function as an Opposition, as there is no prospect of defeating the present Government. May be so from the point of view of some of us. But the record of the working for the last four years of Congress Opposition in the Punjab proves otherwise. When the Congress Opposition commenced its activities, it numbered 19 only. When it ceased to function it could boast of the support of 62 members in the House which gives a majority with the support of 88 members only. It may be safely asserted that if the Party had not been absent from the Assembly, it would have added to its strength still further and possibly the Opposition could have obtained in the time the necessary majority in the Punjab and thereby not only changed the aspect of the politics in the Punjab, but equally affected the entire political situation in India. Incidentally it may be mentioned that the Congress Assembly Party is recognised as the Official Opposition and constitutes the major bloc in the Opposition.

But, obviously, it is not necessary to stress this aspect of Opposition activities. There are other matters which demand the Opposition's urgent attention now at this critical juncture in the Punjab both from national as well as anti-communal points of view, not forgetting, of course, the necessity of preserving the peace of the Province.

The Congress High Command may not be quite aware of the terrible reactionary activities of the Punjab Ministry. This Ministry has and continues to foster the most reactionary and anti-national atmosphere in the Province. It has constantly pursued the policy of nepotism, favouritism and jobbery. The irresponsible exercise of power by the Government has its effect of demoralising the ordinary individuals. The Opposition in the Punjab led by the Congress Party, while functioning, has always endeavoured at every pace to curb, control and expose the Ministry and thereby restrict their baneful influence. This fear of exposure had its somewhat healthy effect. Moreover, the activities of the Congress Party kept the political interest of the entire Province concentrated on the national problems and on the national struggle. So important indeed was this aspect that if the history of the communal disturbances is looked into, no period has been comparatively calmer than the period during which the Opposition was functioning and giving a direct, forceful and unambiguous lead to the Province. This is a fact of tremendous national importance and must be regarded as the pivot of the problem. And this fact is important in view of this, that no period in recent political history has been so full of dangers from the communal point of view as the period since the present Ministry came into power.

Now with the absence of the Congress Party from the Assembly the fear of the

Opposition no longer exists and the roads of reaction have been opened wide. The reactionary forces, whether *Unionists*, or *Hindu* and *Sikh* communalists, have their own way. The Congress is losing ground and all contact seems to be fast diminishing between the Congress and the masses. The reactionary forces in the absence of the Congress Opposition have almost succeeded in establishing themselves as the champions of the very electorates for which the Party fought so strenuously. These forces are consolidating their positions to the detriment of the Congress in the Punjab. While Unionists and other smaller Opposition groups at present in the Punjab Assembly are fighting each other, they appear to agree in forming a common front against the Congress. The Unionists are doing their worst against the Congress and its ideals. The *Hindu* and *Sikh* communalists do not lag behind as it would appear from the proceedings of a meeting recently held at Amritsar where it was decided, among other things, "to wean away the people from the Congress". This fact is a pointer to the increasing activities of the reactionaries in the absence of the lead given by the Congress Party.

It may be mentioned that the Congress Opposition is not unmindful of the constructive side of the Congress programme, but that too depends to a great extent on the work they do in the Assembly.

It is the keen desire of the electorate also that the Party should do its duty in the Assembly at this critical time and voice their grievances and represent their viewpoint, as in the absence of the Congress Party they are forced to approach the communalist members for redressing their grievances.

Under these circumstances, we are firmly of the opinion that if it is the object that the Congress organisation should commit hara-kiri, it is correct that the present inactivity imposed upon the Congress Opposition should continue; but if, on the other hand, it is desired that the nationalist spirit be fostered and its flame constantly fed, it becomes necessary to order the Opposition back to the legislature to defend the national citadel against communalism and reaction.

164. *From Krishna Ballabh Sahai*

Hazaribagh
January 22, 1942

My dear Sir,

You are aware that for some time past I have been anxious to meet you and discuss certain things with you but unfortunately I could not get an opportunity to do so even when we were at Wardha. I am therefore reducing my ideas to writing and expect that you will kindly send me reply point by point.

(1) When I went to Gumla, Narayanji told me that though he had some

money with him to carry on work for the present he would soon stand in need of funds. He expressed his desire that I should raise some money for him either independently or with your help. I feel that I could raise funds for aboriginal work without troubling you but my difficulty is that I have no representative capacity in this matter and it does not look proper that I should approach for help for the work of any individual friend. I think that the best thing would be to form an Aboriginal Board for the Province which would not only raise funds but see to it that all the original areas are served, that the work is carried on right lines and that it gets proper publicity. It goes without saying that you should be the President of the Board which will serve as a sub-committee of the P.C.C. It will include all the aboriginal areas of the Province including the Santhal Parganas. I shall have, if you so desire, no objection to serve on the Board.

(2) You know that for some time past I have been taking interest in the Labour Union of Mr. John at Jamshedpur. When Mr. John invited me to assist him he told me that you had explicitly ordered Bari Saheb not to visit Jamshedpur. In the circumstances I thought that if I or someone from the Province did not associate himself with labour work at Jamshedpur, the area would once more lapse back into the influence and control of Calcutta. I explained the position to Mr. Bari at Wardha, who seemed to have misunderstood me. My request to you therefore is that if you do not permit Mr. Bari to go to Jamshedpur you should have no objection to my helping Mr. John if the latter desires my help, but I do not like that for want of assistance from Bihar, Mr. John should be forced to surrender, which will in its turn leave bad blood behind.

(3) You probably know Mr. Nokhey Misra of Jamshedpur who is the Secretary of the Bihari Association of the place. He was Publicity Assistant to the Labour Officer in the Tatas and has been discharged without any explanation being called from him, obviously because he was actively conducting the Bihari Association and used to represent the grievances of the Biharis. Mr. Nokhey Misra showed his papers to me and I feel that he has been punished for his Bihari activities, while the company is permitting other provincial and sectional organisations to be carried on by its employees. Mr. Hayman was the President during his life of the Anglo-Indian Association, Mr. B.D. Ichaporia is the Secretary of the Parsi Association, and Mr. S.K. Bose is the Secretary of the Bengali Association. I must admit that my impression has been that Mr. Nokhey Misra has been a little unrestrained in his tongue but the punishment for the same should have been a warning or reduction but not discharge. I think that you should write to Mr. Gandhi or Mr. Dalal to reconsider his case. I could do it myself but since I have been assisting Mr. John in his labour activities I feel inclined not to do so. However, if it is your wish that I should represent his case to the Tata authorities I shall comply with it.

(4) You know that with Rs.5,000 which I got from a few friends after my resignation from the office of Parliamentary Secretary I have been running a press and ran a paper called *Chhotanagpur Darpan*. The latter was closed when I

offered Satyagraha in 1940. I am thinking of reviving it. Out of Rs. 1,800 which I set apart for the paper, I have still got in my hand Rs. 1,660 in Bank and paper which was valued at Rs. 125 when I closed the paper year before last but which would be valued at Rs. 300 now, making a total of Rs. 1,960. From the paper I never appropriated any money for my personal use but from the press in which I invested Rs. 3,200 I expected, as I told my friends before they parted with this money, that I would derive an income of Rs. 25 per month for my maintenance. Up till now, i.e. from May 1940 when I purchased the press, to the present day, I have received Rs. 208/14/0 and have to pay a debt of Rs. 146, leaving for my personal use Rs. 60. The information contained in this para is for your recollection and record in your office.

(5) I wanted to discuss with you the position of the Congress in the Province which in my opinion, which is shared by many, has gone to pieces. I have a formula in mind which I would suggest to you. But this can only be done in discussion when you are free for it. I also wanted to tell you how I meet my personal expenses. But this also I could do when I meet you.

Please excuse me for this lengthy letter.

Yours affectionately,
Krishna Ballabh Sahai

Dr. Rajendra Prasad
Sadaquat Ashram
Patna.

165. *From Krushna Chandra Mahapatra*

UTKAL PROVINCIAL CONGRESS COMMITTEE

P.O. Chandnichouk
Cuttack
B.N. Rly
January 29, 1942

My dear Rajendra Babu,

Since we returned from Wardha, there has been a serious turn in the political situation in Orissa. The important Congress workers are being arrested under the Defence of India Rules and it is believed none will be allowed to remain free in a few weeks. In the meantime four prominent Congress workers of Puri district, including the President of the District Congress Committee, have been arrested and three most important workers of the Cuttack district, including the Presidents of the District Congress Committee and the Provincial Congress Committee, have been arrested. Out of these arrested persons two are Congress M.L.A.s, of

whom one is the Secretary to the Congress Assembly Party. It is believed that the cases of about a dozen more are being scrutinised and awaiting orders for arrest. All the speeches that have been referred to in the warrants of arrest were delivered in the last week of December last and in the first week of January 1942, i.e., before the A.I.C.C. resolution suspending the Satyagraha movement and directing all Congressmen to engage themselves in constructive work. The speeches that have been held objectionable now were of the type that used to be delivered almost from the beginning of the war and even during the Satyagraha movement without any objection from the authorities who were then the Governor and his Adviser.

It is difficult to guess the motives behind these arrests. But the fact that the Assembly meets on the 12th February and the Ministry is expecting a vote of no-confidence motion, lends weight to the view that the arrests of important Congress workers, specially of the M.L.A.s, are due to preventing the no-confidence motion from being passed. The meetings in which the so-called objectionable speeches were delivered were all organised to condemn the way in which the Ministry has been formed in Orissa. So it will not be wrong if it is said that the arrests are the work of the Ministers who want to hold on anyhow at any cost with the help of the British bayonet.

There is also another guess in this connection and it is being freely talked about. The seceders from Congress who have joined the formation of Ministry all belong to the Forward Bloc and as a matter of fact some of these, including an M.L.A., attended the meeting of the Forward Bloc which was held along with the A.I.C.C. at Wardha this time. These people are talking about that Congress is the only obstacle in the way of some negotiation with the Axis powers which are sure to overwhelm India in near future and it is for that reason it has been decided by the Forward Bloc as they say that wherever the Forward Bloc is in some power they should utilise that for the suppression of Congress. The present repression in Orissa is a part of that programme. It is foolish at least, if it be true at all.

But the fact that repression has been started in full swing in Orissa will considerably hamper the constructive work and weaken the organisation. Also the proposed no-confidence motion against the Ministry may not be moved in view of the fact that some of the Congress M.L.A.s are sent to jail. In the circumstances, I shall be much obliged if you kindly advise us what to do. May I request you to kindly issue a public statement on the repression in Orissa and its possible repercussions on the Indian situation?

Hope you are doing well.

Yours sincerely,
Krushna Chandra Mahapatra

Babu Rajendra Prasad
Sadaquat Ashram
Patna.

166. *To Krishna Ballabh Sahai*

Sadaquat Ashram
Patna
February 11, 1942

My dear Krishna Ballabh Babu,

Your letter dated 22nd January was received at Banaras when I was too ill to attend to correspondence. I am better now and am trying to dispose of old pending correspondence.

I think it is necessary that we should meet. There are many things which require discussion and it is necessary that you should come here. I do not propose to reply to your letter today. I will do that in the course of the discussion. I think there is some misunderstanding about Jamshedpur which has to be cleared. That also can be done only when you are here. I should like to have some definite information about S. J. Nokhey Mishra before I can think of intervening in the matter.

I have received your letter dated 5th February also, together with a letter from S. J. Narsingh Bhagat, offering two kathas of land free of charge for the Congress office. We have been given land like this at many places and ashrams and houses have been built which now in some places have become either useless or been appropriated for private use by individuals. Many of these are in my name although I know nothing about them. The moral responsibility however remains mine. I therefore hesitate in accepting any further gifts without some assurance about the public use of the land. But you can discuss this also when you are here. Please let me know when you can come because I want Abdul Bari also to be present and I may have to send word to him if he does not happen to be here at the time.

There is one thing more. I think you have become President of the Chhotanagpur Mazdoor Sangh of which Mukut Babu has been the Secretary. I have a complaint. Mukut Babu has withdrawn a large sum of money from a fund without my knowledge and permission and he is not repaying it. I will tell you the details when you are here.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

167. *From Vallabhbhai Patel*

Hajira
(via Surat)
February 12, 1942

My dear Rajen Babu,

I got your letter of the 12th instant and I am glad you are better now.

Jamnalalji has passed away so suddenly. It is a terrible blow to all of us and

Bapu is also greatly upset. He has called us all there on the 20th but I am not in a position to go there so soon. I am afraid you also will not be able to travel such a long distance at present.

It is difficult to keep contact from here to Orissa. I wrote two letters to Sjt. Biswanath Das but there is no acknowledgement. I have arranged to send Rs.2,500 to him through Sjt. G.D. Birla at Calcutta but I don't know whether he has got the amount or not. Do you hear anything from there?

Hoping you are doing well,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai

168. *From Poonamchand*

Nagpur
February 13, 1942

RAJENDRA PRASAD
DIGHAGHAT

PLEASE SEND DECISION LOCAL BODIES

POONAMCHAND

169. *From Biswanath Das and Nityanand Kanungo*

Bakrabad
Cuttack
February 16, 1942

My dear Sir,

I received your kind letter from Patna and showed it to Sri Biswanath Das. The Assembly met for the first time on the 12th inst. and our Party was present in full strength, that is 26 (two members of our Party being in jail, and one being the Speaker). The Government Party numbered 23 in the morning and increased to 26 by the afternoon, the increase being due to arrivals by a noon train. The full strength of the Government Party now is 29. You might have noticed the proceedings of the day in the Patrika (*Amrita Bazar Patrika*) of the 14th and 15th and if you would like to have more detailed report, I will send the same later. Unfortunately none of the motions moved were put to vote. The Premier made a statement at the start on his policy of support of the War and describing broadly the programme of his Party, but did not make any motion for its adoption. Our Leader had no other option but to move for expunging the statement from the proceedings, but the Speaker ruled that the statement should [not] be expunged. The same day an adjournment motion was moved for permitting the two members now in custody to attend the sessions of the Assembly. The Assembly

adjourned from the 13th to the 15th and again met today. The adjournment motion has been ruled out of order.

Discussions on the motions for no-confidence in the Ministry has been fixed for the 18th. We had promises of support from some members; but so much pressure has been put on them that some of them have been terrorised into submission and are not prepared to keep their promises. Yet we are hoping for some developments which may help us. If that does not materialise we may not move the motions that day and wait for a more convenient occasion.

Two by-elections are pending. The dates for one have been fixed, nomination to be filed on the 21st [February] and polling to be held on the 11th of March. The Assembly will be in sessions till the end of March. The constituency is a very far-flung one and has only 2,000 voters on the rolls. The son of Raja of Kanika will contest the seat against the Congress. Our candidate is Sri Umacharan Patnaik, an advocate, who was the ex-Government Pleader, and had been to jail in the last Satyagraha campaign. The area is partially excluded and official interference will be severe. The dates for the other by-election have not been announced yet. If we win both the seats then we will be in an absolute majority in the House.

One of the members of the Assembly, Sri Mohan Das, has been convicted to a term of 8 months and his appeal with the Sessions Judge is pending. The other case against Sri Nabakrushna Chowdhury is still with the magistrate and judgement has not been delivered yet. The case against Sri Harekrushna Mahtab is being heard and dates for cross-examination will be fixed tomorrow. Three prominent workers in Puri have been sentenced to nine months' imprisonment each and cases against two workers of the Cuttack district including the ex-President of the P.C.C., Sri Pran Krushna Padhiari, has not been finished. In all the cases, except that of Sri Mahtab, the speeches were much less offending than those delivered during the Civil Disobedience movement and in the case of Sri Nabakrushna Chowdhury the speech is not offending at all. It is being openly talked about that these arrests have been made to make the position of the Ministry safe. Some of the officers have lent themselves to this intrigue. It is freely spoken that two members of the Assembly will be arrested tomorrow if there is still any doubt of the majority of the Government Party and more will be done in the recess before the Assembly meets on the 5th of March. From 5th onward the programme puts down mostly voting on demands on the Budget and unspecified Government business.

Further developments will be communicated.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,
Biswanath Das
N. Kanungo

N.B. Please issue a message asking the Baliguda-Khondmal constituency to vote for the Congress candidate.

170. *From Krushna Chandra Mahapatra*

UTKAL PROVINCIAL CONGRESS COMMITTEE

Utkal Swarajyashram
 Sahebjada Bazar
 P.O. Chandnichouk
 Cuttack
 February 20, 1942

Dear Rajendra Prasadji,

Please accept my respectful pranam.

You know that several Congress leaders of our Province including Sri Harekrushna Mahtab, Sri Nabakrushna Chowdhuri, Pandit Pran Krushna Padhiari and Sri Mohan Das are now in jail under Defence of India Rules and there are very few persons now available to carry on the Congress work in this Province. This situation has been created by the present Orissa Ministry to preserve their existence and to smoothly manage the election campaign for the two vacant seats in the Orissa Assembly—one caused by the death of Thatraj of Bisam Katak (elected from the Baliguda-Khondmal constituency in Ganjam district), and the other by the resignation of Sri Sadhu Charan Das, one of the eight seceders from the Congress Assembly Party (elected from the North Jaipur constituency in Cuttack district), protesting against the repressive policy of the present Ministry. They are also contemplating and planning for the arrests of our candidates to be set up for contest in those constituencies and several other Congress workers having influence over the voters in the said two constituencies.

The by-election in one of the said two constituencies, viz., the Baliguda-Khondmal [constituency] has now been notified to be held on 11.3.42. The constituency extends over an excluded area of this Province mainly inhabited by aborigines, where no Congress propaganda has yet been done. It is also a Government Khasmahal area.

With the approval of the Chairman of the Congress Parliamentary Sub-Committee, Sardar V. Patel, we have set up Sri Umacharan Patnaik, M.A., B.L., as the Congress candidate in this by-election. He resigned the Government Pledership of Ganjam district and joined the last Satyagraha movement and courted imprisonment after offering Satyagraha and was in charge of the Ganjam D.C.C. after his release from jail. He is very honest and reliable.

The ministerialist party, it is said, are setting up there the Tikayat of Kanika to contest the by-election. They are carrying on vigorous propaganda for their candidate with the help of the power (whole Government machinery), money and men (the vast resources of the candidate himself supplemented by those of the Maharaja of Parlakimedi, Raja of Khallikote and several other rich zamindars, mahajans and mahantas, etc., of their Party).

On the complaint of one Joyakrushna Malik of Cuttack town a warrant of arrest

under Defence of India Rules has already been issued against Sri Govind Pradhan, a Congress M.L.A., having a very great hold over the voters of this constituency. The purport of the complaint is that Govind Babu, while taking tea in a hotel, advised the complainant not to attend a theatrical performance in aid of the War Fund and as the complainant was not willing to act up to the advice Govind Babu called him names (*lafanga*). As the complainant is not a Government servant the City Magistrate sent the case for enquiry by Police and on the Police submitting a report to the effect, the Magistrate has issued the said warrant. There is also a very strong rumour that they are arranging for the arrest of Sri U.C. Patnaik, our candidate, in a day or two.

To encourage our workers, a few words from you by way of blessing and message will have a very great effect. I, therefore, request you to send us the same at your earliest convenience.

Yours respectfully,
Krushna Ch. Mahapatra
Office Secretary

171. *From Vallabhbhai Patel*

Hajira
(via Surat)
February 21, 1942

My dear Rajendra Babu,

It seems things are moving rapidly in Orissa. The Ministry is bent upon keeping its office by all means fair or foul. Our people have not moved the no-confidence motion probably because they were afraid of defeat. Mahtab is also arrested.

I have sent Rs.2,500 to Biswanath Das as per his estimate through Birlaji at Calcutta but I don't know that the amount has reached him. Brijmohan wires that he has sent the money but he has not received acknowledgement.

I have just received a letter from the Speaker Shri Mukunda Prasad Das requesting me to allow him to resign from Presidentship. He says the atmosphere is so full of mutual suspicion and distrust that it is impossible to discharge his duties without being misunderstood. I have written to him that the matter will have to be referred to the Working Committee as the selection of Speakers was made by that Committee even before the Ministry was formed. It would be better if someone of us would go to Orissa. You are not well I am also stuck up here. If Kripalani can go it would be better. Please inform Maulana about it also. I am not in touch with him at all.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai

P.S. I am also inviting Kripalani to proceed to Orissa at once.

172. *From Vallabhbhai Patel*

Hajira

February 27, 1942

My dear Rajenbabu,

I got your letter of the 24th last evening. I don't think Bapu will allow you to go so soon and hence I am writing this to you at Wardha. Bapu writes that Mahadev had a narrow escape and he could not go to Nasik. It is very sad and it will put additional strain on Bapu. Mahadev also needs a good assistant, but we are so short of men.

About Orissa I saw your interview in the *Hindu* of the 24th today. I am afraid Biswanath Das is not equal to the task. The Opposition is too unscrupulous and resourceful for him and Mahtab's arrest has made it more difficult for him.

I have already written to Kripalani to go there at once. They want some encouragement also.

The Speaker there also is unhelpful if not hostile, at least that is what Biswanath Das complains. I wrote to you about the Speaker's desire to resign but I have asked him to wait till the next meeting of the W.C. I think we should call him at that time.

There is another by-election to take place also. Please let me know your programme.

I am leaving this place on the 6th. After that you may write to me at Ahmedabad. There is some improvement in my health, but it is not enough.

Hope you are all right now.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai

P.S. After I addressed this to Wardha I learnt that you have left Wardha, so I am sending this to Patna.

173. *To Vallabhbhai Patel*

As at Sadaquat Ashram
P.O. Dighaghat
Dist. Patna
February 28, 1942

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I have received your letters. On returning to Patna I have received two letters from Orissa, copies of which I am enclosing to you.* I am also enclosing copy of a

letter I am addressing to Biswanath Babu. I hope he will write to you.

I have just received a telegram from Kripalaniji informing me that you have asked him to proceed to Orissa and he wants to see me before doing that. I am asking him to see me at Patna tomorrow and then we shall decide if it is necessary for him to go there. I am also asking Sjt. Biswanath Das to let me know if he wants Kripalaniji there at present either to help him in Cuttack or in connection with the by-election. We shall decide on receipt of his letter. I am well and hope you are improving.

Yours affectionately,
Rajendra Prasad

*See letter from Biswanath Das and Nityanand Kanungo dated 16 February 1942 and letter from Krushna Chandra Mahapatra dated 20 February 1942, both addressed to Dr. Rajendra Prasad

Enclosure:

(Copy of Dr. Rajendra Prasad's letter to Biswanath Das)

As at Sadaquat Ashram
P.O. Dighaghat
Dist. Patna
February 28, 1942

My dear Biswanath Babu,

Many thanks for your and Sjt. Kanungo's joint letter. Sardar Vallabhbhai has written to me that he has not received any letter from Orissa and he is anxious about the situation. I have forwarded to him copy of your letter but it is already an old letter. Kindly write to him immediately on receipt of this letter giving a full report about the situation there. He also informs me that he has remitted Rs. 2,500 to you as asked by you for the by-election but he has not received any acknowledgement. The money has been remitted through Sjt. B.M. Birla of Calcutta. Kindly write to him about it also and keep him informed about developments, sending to Maulana Saheb and to me copies of your letters to him.

I was somewhat surprised to read the explanation given by one of your colleagues about your decision not to move the non-confidence resolution. I think that on your behalf a straight explanation saying that it was not moved because you had lost the majority on account of the Government action in arresting or detaining your members should have been given, if it fitted in with facts. This would have created the correct impression on the public also. You must have seen Pandit Godavaris Misra's statement about the non-confidence

motion and my reply to it which was published in the *Hindu* of Madras and I believe in other papers also. I am enclosing an appeal to voters.*

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

*See enclosure to Rajendra Prasad's letter dated 28 February 1942 to Krishna Chandra Mahapatra.

174. *To Krishna Chandra Mahapatra*

As at Sadaquat Ashram
Dighaghat
February 28, 1942

Dear Sri Mahapatra,

I have received your letter dated 20-2-42. I am enclosing an appeal as desired by you and have sent a copy of it to S.J. Biswanath Das also. I have noted the other matters. Please keep Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel also informed about the situation there. His address at present is Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Hajira (via Surat). He has remitted Rs.2,500 to S.J. Biswanath Das for meeting the expenses of the by-election. Please see my letter to S.J. Biswanath Das.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

Enclosure:

APPEAL TO VOTERS

At a momentous time a by-election is taking place in Orissa to fill up a vacancy in the Legislative Assembly. The people of Orissa know in what circumstances and how a Ministry has been formed in that Province by the defection and desertion of a number of members of the Assembly who have refused to honour the pledge which they had given in writing at the time of the election. The voters have to decide whether they support the action of these deserters by voting for the candidate set up by their Party or whether they want honest and straightforward politics and support the Congress candidate who, apart from other qualifications as being a capable man, possesses the additional qualification of having served the country and suffered for it.

I appeal to the voters to cast their votes in favour of honest politics and in favour of the programme the Congress stands for. I am aware that all kinds of

tricks including abuse of power will be and are being resorted to and many prominent Congressmen including some members of the Assembly have been arrested or imprisoned to weaken, if not to break, the strength of the Congress. But I feel confident that Orissa voters stand behind the Congress in solid phalanx and will show it by voting for the Congress candidate.

Rajendra Prasad
28.2.42

175. *From Atul Chandra Ghose*

Shilpashram
Purulia
March 1, 1942

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I hope you have come back from Wardha in good health. You had to go there with a heavy heart to attend the Shradh of a beloved and revered co-worker the type of whom is not easily found in the world of today. Really Wardha is inconceivable without dear Jamnalalji. But His will be done. The only consolation is that he will long live in the minds of his countrymen and his name will go down to the posterity.

Sj. Jagjivan Babu came here the other day. We learn from him that you are contemplating upon opening some Khadi production centres in the districts. In this district there are at least three different centres where Khadi production may be taken up. Of one centre I may be in charge, Chitta of another centre, and Sjt. Satya Kinkar Mahato, a non-arrested Satyagrahi and a very good and sincere worker, of another centre. Sj. Jagjivan Babu is also of opinion that some Khadi production centres should be started in this district. You may consult him in this matter. We are going to open a weaving centre at *** with 1 or 2 looms to teach weaving to some of our workers and villagers and also to get the yarn of our workers and villagers woven into cloth. Kindly think over my suggestion. We have also started two charkha-salas, one at *** and another at *** where charkhas will be made for sale to the villagers in the district. Now if the Charkha Sangh opens 2 or 3 production centres, they will get enough spinners for the purpose.

With love,

Yours sincerely,
Atul Chandra Ghose

176. *From Nityanand Kanungo*

Bakrabad
Cuttack
March 2, 1942

My dear Sir,

Enclosed please find a copy of Sri Biswanath Dasjee's letter to Sardar.

Sri Nabakrushna Chowdhury has been sentenced to six months' R.I. and appeal will be filed in the Court of the Sessions Judge of Cuttack. Sri Mahtab's case will drag on for some time yet. In both these cases and in the case of Shri Mohan Das, M.L.A., and two others of Puri we have to go up to the High Court in appeal. And we look up to you to find lawyers to take up our cases on easy terms. You are not unaware of our financial condition, but we will be able to pay expenses and a moderate fee if necessary. The case of Mahtab and of Nabakrushna will need special handling as on the merits there are good chances of success; that is what our lawyers say here. Kindly send me the necessary introduction letters so that when I send the papers per messenger, I will send them with your introduction.

Kindly let me know if you will be passing via Calcutta on any date during the next two weeks, so that I shall try to meet you there and acquaint you with events here. With regards,

Yours sincerely,
N. Kanungo

Sri Rajendra Prasad
Patna.

Enclosure:

(Copy of letter from Biswanath Das to Vallabhbhai Patel)

C/o N. Kanungo
-Bakrabad, Cuttack
March 2, 1942

My dear Sardarjee,

I have received your letters dated the 18th & 21st. Evidently you have not received my letter of the 16th February. I hope it will reach you. I have received one note from you which I have acknowledged in my letter of the 16th. I also sent you copy of my letter to Rajendra Babu dated the 16th February and later Sri Kanungo sent you a copy of letter to Rajendra Babu dated the 27th.

I reached here this noon and am going back this evening to the constituency in Ganjam where the by-election is to be held. I have been there since the 12th

February and shall be there up to the 17th March which is the polling day. My address there will be: Congress Office, P.O. Phulbani, Khondmals, Dist. Ganjam. Thereafter my address will be as above. The prospects of the by-election are very favourable so far. But since yesterday the Tikayat of Kanika (the rival candidate) has requisitioned the services of Nilakantha Das's group and have started spending money too freely. I shall keep you informed of developments from time to time.

I received a wire from Sri Kripalani and later from Rajendra Babu asking me to fix a suitable date for Kripalani's coming here. As I shall be engaged in the by-election till the 17th, it will be convenient if he could come on the same [day] or any [day] immediately after it. I do not want to give him the trouble of going in for the election campaign. His presence will no doubt be of very great help to our party, and that can be handled only after the 17th when I am back at Cuttack. I am writing to Sri Kripalani and Rajendra Babu accordingly. Sri Mukunda Prasad Das, Speaker, is not here, but will be back by the 5th inst. when the Assembly meets, and continues till the end of March.

Sri Nabakrushna Chowdhury, Secy. of the P.C.C., and M.L.A. has been convicted [and sentenced] to 6 months' R.I. on the 28th. Appeal will be filed on the 5th when the Judge's Court will reopen after the holidays. The other M.L.A. of Puri, Sri Mohan Das, has been convicted and sentenced to 8 months' R.I. and his appeal will be heard on the 3rd March at Berhampore.

Yours sincerely,
Biswanath Das

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
68 Marine Drive
Bombay.

177. *From Nityanand Kanungo*

Bakrabad
Cuttack
March 8, 1942

My dear Sir,

I have received your kind letter and the statement to the Press. Enclosed please find a copy of letter to Srimati Amrit Kaur which will give you the report up to date.

Sri Bichitranad Das, Advocate, had met you at Patna, and conveyed your good wishes to us.

I presume you will be leaving Patna soon for Wardha. So you will please let me know whom to approach for our work in the High Court. I wonder if Mathura

Babu will stay in Patna, in which case he will surely help us. Sessions Judge is likely to deliver judgement in the appeal of Sri Naba Chowdhury on the 14th and I propose to send a messenger with the necessary papers on the 15th night so that he will reach on the 17th. If we could successfully move the High Court for bail in the cases of the two members of the Assembly on the 18th, then their votes will be available for the voting on demands which begins from the 18th.

The High Court has allowed bail to Sri Kamath of the Forward Bloc who is being prosecuted in Arrah. Our lawyers want to have copy of the order and of the bail petition. Could any friend send us the same? The costs will be sent as soon as I hear about the amount. I am sorry to send you these petty requests, but we are so handicapped that I have no other go. I hope some friend in the B.P.C.C. office will be able to handle the work.

I am afraid my earlier intention of seeing you en route to Wardha will not be possible. But kindly let me have your programme for this month so that I may know where to address you.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,
N. Kanungo

Sri Rajendra Prasad
Patna.

Enclosure:

(Copy of letter from N. Kanungo to Rajkumari Amrit Kaur)

Bakrabad
Cuttack
March 8, 1942

Dear Friend,

I have received your kind note of the 5th inst. and am glad to know that the earlier reports have reached Bapu.

The hearing of the case against Mahtab in the Court of the Magistrate has been over and judgement is to be delivered on the 17th inst. Arrangements have been made to file the appeal on the same day.

Sri Nabakrushna Chowdhury, the Secy. of the P.C.C., was [sentenced] to six months' imprisonment. Appeal was filed before the Sessions Judge who has fixed the hearing for the 14th but has refused bail. Appeal of Sri Mohan Das has been heard on the 7th and judgement has to be delivered. These two are members of the Assembly, and in case they are acquitted then we will be able to defeat the Budget, which will come up for voting from the 18th. Cases against three other workers of the Cuttack district are still in the hearing stage before the Magistrate. In the meantime another case has been started against Sri Prankrushna Parihari, who was the President of the P.C.C. during the campaign of 1941, for a speech. He is still being tried in the Magistrate's court for a speech. Appeal before the

Sessions Judge of Ganjam has been filed against the conviction of three workers of the Puri district. I shall report the results when orders are passed.

Sri Biswanath Das is busy in the Baliguda constituency where by-election is being held and will stay there till the 17th which is the polling date. Reports received from there indicate that the prospects of our candidate are good. But nothing can be said till the voting is over. Dates for by-election in another constituency in the Cuttack district have not been announced yet, though we have written requesting to hold the same soon. But my impression is that they will not have the elections till the Assembly session is over.

Acharya Kripalani has been requested to come here on or after the 18th inst. by Sri Biswanath Das to discuss about the request of our Speaker Sri Mukund Prasad Das to resign his Speakership. It was not considered urgent to give him the trouble of helping in the by-election as the constituency is very far-flung, and the people there cannot understand Hindi.

Sri Radhakrushna Biswasroy, the President of P.C.C., has come here after his recovery from an attack of chicken-pox and is looking after P.C.C. work. The Finance Minister in his budget speech mentioned that troops will be stationed in some places in the Province, which has been causing apprehension in the countryside. We are handicapped for lack of workers of experience. For the present our District Congress Committees are concentrating on the production of Khadi. Though accurate reports are not available yet, still the progress is encouraging.

Publication of the weekly paper *Rachana* which was started by Mahtab is continuing under the editorship of Sriman Manmohan, son of Sri Gopabandhu Chowdhury. Sri B.M. Birla had kindly promised to donate 50 reams of paper for the weekly and has already despatched 30 reams. Mahtab had asked Bapu to kindly arrange that the leading article in the *Harijan* could be available here at Cuttack on Friday or Saturday each week so that the same could be published in translation, without waiting for the *Harijan* by post. Would it be possible?

With regards,

Yours sincerely,

N. Kanungo

Shrimati Amrit Kaur
Sevagram.

178. To Raja Bahadur Kamkhya Narain Sinha

Sadaquat Ashram
P.O. Dighaghat
Patna
March 8, 1942

My dear Babu Saheb,

At the time of your interview with Mahatma Gandhi at Ramgarh there was an idea that you would be pleased to have some Khadi work done within your estate

and invest a reasonable amount in it. I do not know if the idea has fructified. I take the liberty however of bringing to your notice that at the present moment there is a great demand for Khadi. On account of the situation created by the war the prices of mill cloth has gone up and there is also an apprehension that scarcity of cloth will be felt later on. Most of the mills are now engaged in supplying war order and many of them also export some of their production to countries which used formerly to be supplied by Japan, England and America. It is therefore also certain that they would not be able to meet all the requirements of cloth and no foreign cloth can be imported in the present circumstances. It is therefore necessary that the production of Khadi should be expanded as much as possible. Besides supplying employment to the poorest class of our population it will be able to offer a necessity of life which will very soon become scarce in the country. The All India Spinners' Association is therefore anxious to increase production as much as possible. May I request you to invest a suitable amount in this work? There are two ways of doing this. The money may be given as a gift straightway to the Bihar Branch of the All India Spinners' Association on condition that it will invest it in Khadi work within the district of Hazaribagh. I may add that the All India Spinners' Association has at present a capital of 27 lacs of rupees which has been given to it by generous and patriotic people and about 2 lacs of rupees out of it are invested within this Province. In case this does not appeal to you, the money will be invested in the Khadi work on behalf of the Raj, the profit and loss of which will go to the Raj. But the managing agency of carrying on the work may be given to the All India Spinners' Association which has a large body of expert workers engaged in this work and is able to look after both the technical and business side of it. We would naturally prefer the first alternative but the All India Spinners' Association will be prepared to undertake the managing agency without any remuneration. If the second alternative is more acceptable, I shall gladly come over with the Secretary of the All India Spinners' Association to discuss details if you consider it necessary. I need hardly point out that in these hard times it will serve as a method of double relief to the poor by providing them with employment and by supplying a necessity of life to all. I wish you could visit some centre where Khadi work is going on and I have no doubt you will see with your own eyes the utility and the scope of this form of relief. There is a small centre within the Ramgarh Raj which is being worked by the All India Spinners' Association at Khutara, Pabara and other villages in Hazaribagh.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

Raja Bahadur Kamakhya Narain Sinha
Padma.

179. *From Harekrushna Mahtab*

Cuttack
March 12, 1942

My dear Rajendra Babu,

The date for delivering my judgement was the 17th. But suddenly yesterday I was produced before the court and simply fined Rs. 100 and released. The court has held that the offence committed by me was of a very technical character. There is going to be an appeal in the judge's court. Now it seems the situation here has been stabilised. The by-election is going on and all reports indicate the Congress will win in spite of heavy odds. Besides Ministerial misdeeds, the war situation is creating such problems as require very careful handling. We are doing our best and I believe we will get out successful.

Hope you are doing well.

Yours sincerely,
H. Mahtab

Babu Rajendra Prasad
Patna.

180. *From J.B. Kripalani*

Allahabad
March 13, 1942

My dear Rajendrababu,

Your letter of the 9th instant from Patna reached me only today. I do not know why it should have taken so many days. After I wrote to you about Utkal I received information that they did not want me for the by-elections but after the 17th. So I take it that the Utkal visit is postponed for the time being.

You wrote your letter before the statement was made. You may now be inclined to stay away. But I think this meeting is an important one inasmuch as some of us will have to meet Cripps. In that case we must decide more precisely our policy than hitherto. If we don't, he may get one impression in his talk with Rajaji and Vallabhbhai and quite a different idea from Jawaharlal. So I think some kind of unanimity will have to be evolved.

However if your health does not permit, you should not take the trouble. At this time it is more necessary that you keep your health.

Jawaharlalji is leaving tomorrow by the noon train. I will be leaving day after [tomorrow] evening by the Bombay Express. This train has again been started.

With pranams,

Yours sincerely,
J.B. Kripalani

181. *From V. Raghaviah*

ALL INDIA CRIMINAL TRIBES ASSOCIATION

Nellore

March 15, 1942

Dear Sri Rajen Babu,

You gave such a wise lead withdrawing Congressmen from local bodies in your Province of Bihar and even expelled those that disobeyed Congress mandate. This experience should have convinced you about the correctness of my repeated requests re the application of the policy to Andhra, nay, all over India. Unless this is done your resolutions at Wardha will be pious ones and Congress would have been buried fathoms deep before you can wake up to the need of clearing Congress States.

V. Raghaviah

Note. See also V Raghaviah's letter dated 15 March 1942 to Mahatma Gandhi in Correspondence, Part II, of this volume

182. *From Abul Kalam Azad*

March 15, 1942

DR RAJENDRAPRASAD
VILLAGE ZERADEI

HOLDING WORKING COMMITTEE FOR IMPORTANT CONGRESS WORKS
POSTPONEMENT UNDESIRABLE PLEASE ATTEND

ABUL KALAM AZAD

183. *To Raja Bahadur Kamakhya Narain Sinha*

P.O. Zeradei
District Saran
March 15, 1942

Dear Babu Saheb,

Your letter dated the 10th March has been received by me. I welcome your desire to help the Khadi work and shall be happy to be able to give such help as I

can. You know the All India Spinners' Association has got the headquarters of the Bihar Branch at Madhubani in your district. The principle on which the Bihar Branch works has been laid down by the All India Association of which Mahatma Gandhi is the President. One of the principal things on which the Association insists is that adequate wages should be paid to the spinners and a scale has been laid down for various qualities of yarn in such a way as to ensure to the spinner $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 annas per day for 8 hours' work on the charkha. This scale has been reached after a great deal of investigation and experiments by experts among whom is Shri Vinoba Bhave. For any spinner who works less than 8 hours or has less efficiency and speed than is contemplated or works with a charkha which has less than the standard efficiency prescribed, the wages earned correspondingly will be less than the prescribed minimum. If the spinner has greater speed, more efficient charkha, and devotes more time, the wages will be correspondingly more than the minimum. The Spinners' Association gives certificates only to those private producers who are prepared to work according to the rules of the Association and to pay the prescribed wages. The Spinners' Association does not regard that cloth as Khadi which has been prepared with wages lower than the wages prescribed by it, even though it may be handspun and handwoven cloth. There should be no difficulty in your getting a certificate if you conform to these rules. I may suggest to you, however, one aspect of the Khadi movement for your consideration. We want to spread the work throughout the Province. Most of it is now concentrated in the Darbhanga district and particularly in the Madhubani subdivision. All the cloth that is produced there is not sold locally and more than 90 per cent of it has to be sent to other places and to other districts for sale. The other districts naturally want to have production. The Spinners' Association has not got capital with which to open such production centres in other districts. It is therefore anxious to raise capital. It is also becoming more and more difficult to transport Khadi from one place to another and sooner or later a situation could be reached when Khadi produced in one place will not be sold in another place. May I therefore suggest to you to invest the amount which you propose to through the Spinners' Association so that the work may proceed according to a comprehensive programme which has been prepared and if you so desire the amount may be earmarked for your district or subdivision. This will enable the Charkha Sangh to release some of its capital which is now invested there and invest it elsewhere. I hope this will appeal to you. If it does not, you may certainly have your own independent organisation and the Spinners' Association would give you a certificate if you agree to act in conformity with its rules and fulfil its conditions. On hearing from you about the choice, I will write to the Charkha Sangh to do the needful. It is not necessary for me to make a reference to S. Satyanarayan Sinha or S. Chet Nath Jha about you. Your name and the name of your estate are enough introduction.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

184. *To Valmiki Choudhary*

Post Zeradei
Distt. Saran
16 March 1942

My dear Valmiki,¹

We have come here. On the day we came there was tremendous rush in the train and we were in the second class and it was a great hardship. However in Patna also there must have been some laxity of restrictions. On coming here I had a fresh attack of cough. There is no fever nor any other sort of complaint. So please meet Vaidya Shri Satyanarain Shastriji, give him my letter, and whatever medicine he gives, send to me by parcel. It is a rural area, and so here syrup etc. are not available. Medicines of any kind are to be sent from there. If any medicine is to be taken with honey, then honey can be had here. Please send the medicine immediately. Because of this cough I have given up the idea of going to Wardha. The sooner the medicine comes, the quicker will I recover and then I will go to Prayag on 25 March.* Perhaps I will go via Banaras. If I require your presence, I will inform you. That day you might have come to meet me at the station with my woollen wrapper. I could not go. You were unnecessarily troubled.

The rest is fine. Hope you are studying with all your attention. You must pass the examination.

Rajendra Prasad

P.S. Please ask Vaidyaji about the medication he prescribes and write to me clearly about dosage and administration thereof.

R.P

¹Private Secretary to Dr Rajendra Prasad All letters from Dr Rajendra Prasad to Valmiki Choudhary were originally written in Hindi

*A meeting of the All India Congress Committee was to be held at Allahabad and Gandhiji had sent Dr Rajendra Prasad, through Mira Ben, the draft of a proposal which he was instructed to get passed by the Congress Working Committee before it was passed by the All India Congress Committee. This famous proposal was drafted by Gandhiji himself

185. *From Nityanand Kanungo*

Cuttack
19 March 1942

RAJENDRAPRASAD
SADAQUAT ASHRAM
PATNA

CONGRESS CANDIDATE BALIGUDA BYELECTION ELECTED OVERWHELMING
MAJORITY

KANUNGO



Dr. Rajendra Prasad with Mahatma Gandhi

186. *From Harekrushna Mahtab*

Cuttack
March 23, 1942

My dear Rajendra Babu,

Many thanks for your letter of the 16th March 1942. This is the last time I write to you in English, for I am learning how to write in Hindi and I think I shall be able to write letters in a week or so in Hindi.

Of course now I am out, but appeal has been filed against the sentence of fine of Rs. 100. It is now pending in the Court of the Sessions Judge. You must have known that Congress has secured a very large majority of votes in the by-election in spite of repression and gross abuse of administrative machinery. The Tikayat of Kanika who stood against us was just on the point of losing his deposit money. The present Party position is: Congress—30, including the Speaker, and the other side is 29. But, of the Congress members, 2 are in jail. Because of this the Ministry carries on.

As regards the general situation in Orissa, it is very serious and this parliamentary programme pales into insignificance when I think of that. But we are trying our best to meet the situation as best as we can. I am in constant touch with Bapuji and seeking his opinion on every point. The difficulty here is dearth of workers. I am simply praying to God, He may grant energy and resourcefulness to as many of us as are in the field to be more useful at this juncture.

Hope you are now better.

Yours sincerely,
H. Mahtab

187. *To Ramcharitra Singh*

Zeradei
March 24, 1942

My dear Ramcharitra Babu,

Apart from the questions which will arise and which we will discuss at the Working Committee and P.C.C. meetings, there is one question which I think will deserve our serious consideration. Our Province does not produce enough food crops to maintain its population even during normal times. This year on account of the return home of a large number of people who used to earn and live outside the Province there is bound to be a big shortage of foodstuff. Price control is not likely to solve the problem, nor can even effectively control price unless shops are opened which will sell at the fixed price and thereby compel other shopkeepers also to sell likewise. I do not know how far we can do this. We

have not got finances nor, I fear, have we got the organisation which could take up this work. I am thinking of asking a few friends who can help us in arriving at a correct decision on this question to meet at Patna on the 31st instant by which time I hope we shall be free from the preoccupations of the P.C.C. We shall ask such of the members of the Working Committee and P.C.C. as are interested in this to stay on. I hope you have invited the Working Committee friends who are ordinarily invited and the Secretary of the Charkha Sangh and other similar organisations under the circular of the A.I.C.C. I hope this time we shall be able to give some time to these questions relating to construction programme.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

A copy forwarded to B. Sri Krishna Sinha and B. Anugrah Narayan Sinha.

Rajendra Prasad

188. *From Dr. Gopichand Bhargava*

Lajpatrai Bhawan
Lahore
March 26, 1942

My dear Babuji,

I want to inform you what happened here during Maulana Sahib's visit.

Mr. Gilani had come here and he met Sir Sikander. The news of his visit and interviews was not kept very confidential. His brother knew something and talked to some persons. Mr. Gilani met me as well. He told me that last time when Maulana Sahib met Sir Sikander, he was told that Congress should agree with following points:

1. Complete Provincial Autonomy.
2. Centre to be given such powers as are agreed to by the Provinces.
3. Residuary powers to be with the Centre.
4. Right of secession with the Provinces.

It is said Maulana Sahib expressed the opinion that Congress should accept the terms.

There was a Conference of Muslim Ulemas. They adopted a similar resolution. I am enclosing a copy of report from the *Tribune*. It was alleged here that Maulana Sahib agreed with this resolution.

The Board of Azad Muslims also met here. They had consultations with Sir Sikander and it is said that practically an agreement has been arrived at between

them. Sir Sikander told a friend that practically a settlement had been arrived at between him and Azad Muslim Conference. It is rumoured that the terms of settlement are similar. Congressmen like Dr. Khan Sahib, Mr. Asaf Ali, and Mian Iftikhar-ud-Din are connected with this Azad Muslim Conference.

Maulana Sahib did not consult any other person here except Mian Sahib.

Sir Sikander was negotiating with Akalis as well. The Akalis said, you leave Muslim League. He said, you leave Congress. This was not agreed to. But this negotiation was for Assembly work and Ministries.

The Congress Assembly Party has been negotiating with some members of the Assembly. Some Muslims were ready to leave Sir Sikander but they were Muslim Leaguers.

Some of the Sikhs have left Unionist Group.

The feeling here is that Congress would suffer if this Pakistan or Zonal or similar scheme were agreed to without consultation. People will have to be satisfied before the settlement becomes a fact.

I am writing this for your information. Before this Mian Sahib had a talk with Sir Sikander and that was at the instance of Bapu according to Mian Sahib's version.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,
Gopichand Bhargava

Enclosure not included

189. *From Govindan Nair*

Chalapuram
March 30, 1942

RAJEN BABU ALLAHABAD
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU ALLAHABAD
PRESIDENT CONGRESS ALLAHABAD
I PRAKASAM ALLAHABAD
DR PATTABHI SITARAMAYYA ALLAHABAD

VAST MAJORITY KERALA CONGRESSMEN DEPLORE MADRAS RESOLUTION
STOP SILENCE OF EX-MINISTERS CREATE GRAVE APPREHENSION IN PUBLIC MIND
STOP REQUEST YOU AND WORKING COMMITTEE GIVE DEFINITE LEAD TO AICC
AGAINST RESOLUTION

GOVINDAN NAIR
SECY KERALA CONGRESS

190. *To Valmiki Choudhary*

Birla House
New Delhi
5 April 1942

My dear Valmiki,
Blessings!

Yesterday Mathura Babu wrote to you a letter informing you that we would start from here today and reach Banaras on 6 April. The work here has not been finished and so we cannot start today. Hope to start on Tuesday and reach Banaras by the same train on Wednesday at about 9 in the morning. But do not take the trouble to come to the station. On reaching there I will pick you up from Vidyapith. If you don't come your time will not be wasted. In the meantime labour hard to prepare yourself for the examination. When we meet I shall be happy to see that you are prepared. I am keeping good health.

Yours,
Rajendra Prasad

191. *To Valmiki Choudhary*

New Delhi
Birla House
11 April 1942

My dear Valmiki,

Blessings! We will start on our journey tonight and reach Banaras by way of Mughal Sarai tomorrow by the 4.34 train in the afternoon or by the 6.09 train in the evening. If this card reaches you in time, come to the station, and it will also be good to send information to Vaidyaji. If you get time, please do that. Rest is well. But don't take unnecessary trouble to inform Vaidyaji.¹ I will go along with you and start for Patna by the night train.

Yours,
Rajendra Prasad

¹Pandit Satyanarain Shastri of Banaras.

192. *To the Secretary, District Congress Committee, Muzaffarpur*

Sadaquat Ashram
Patna
April 17, 1942

Dear Sir,

I desire to have a short tour of the districts of the Province. I do not propose to go into interior but the idea is to collect the Congress workers at the headquarters

of the district where I may meet them and have a talk about the present situation and the Congress programme. I may stay there for two days so that there may be sufficient time for discussion. It would be desirable also to have a meeting of the grain merchants of the place so that I may have a talk with them about the grain situation. It is apprehended that there may be shortage of some foodgrains in the Province and the idea is to have a talk with the merchants as to how the situation can be met and in what way they can help in maintaining regular supplies at reasonable prices.

It would be desirable also to arrange an informal meeting if possible of the prominent citizens of the place for a discussion about the present situation. You may also have one public meeting during my stay if you consider it necessary. I hope you will kindly make the necessary arrangements.

A copy of my programme is enclosed from which you will notice that I propose to spend from 13th to 14th May at your place.

I should like you to keep a report of the work done in the district ready for my inspection. This should specifically mention number of members and volunteers already enrolled. I would further like to make earnest endeavours to raise funds for constructive work and other Congress activities during my visit.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

Enclosure not included.

193. *From Balram Singh*

U. P. KAUMI ITTEHAD CONFERENCE
(Organised by U.P. Provincial Hindu-Muslim Unity Board)

Ganga Prasad Memorial Hall
Lucknow
April 20, 1942

My dear Rajen Babu,

We sent you two letters but we are afraid they have not reached you. We are organising a U.P. Kaumi Ittehad Conference on the 2nd and 3rd of May. Originally it was fixed for the 11th April but as all the leaders could not leave Delhi at that time, we postponed the Conference.

The idea of organising this Conference at the present moment is to bring all the parties on the platform, for the time being leaving all political controversies, for a united front when the country is threatened with external aggression and internal disorder. There is every possibility that under such circumstances communal riots might break out. As such we have to guard against such emergencies and at the same time carry on programme of communal harmony. I

am glad to write that we have been able to secure the cooperation of both Muslim League and Mahasabha leaders for this cause. Idea of organising such a conference came to us sometime in May last when there were communal riots in several parts of the country. Mr. M.L. Shah, Mr. Madan Mohan Prasad (of Gaya) met you in Biharsharif and discussed the affairs of the All India Students' Federation. We decided to do something towards communal harmony as well. Immediately on my return from Bihar I took up the work and after 2 weeks I was arrested in connection with the Satyagraha movement. Now I have taken up the work. I think we have to do all that is possible to avert and safeguard from the dangers of communal riots under the present circumstances. I am sure you will not disappoint us. We have fixed the Conference for the 2nd and 3rd May. We want you to preside over the Conference and thus lend your helping hand to this noble cause. I know you are going to Darbhanga on the 3rd May to inaugurate the Bihar Provincial Students' Conference. I have asked Mr. Parmashwari Nandan Singh to postpone the Conference for the 5th and 6th of May so that there might not be any clash and you may be able to grace both the functions.

I shall be meeting you [at] the A.I.C.C. meeting [in] Allahabad.

Please send your consent by wire that will encourage the workers.

With respects,

Yours obediently,
Balram Singh
Convener

194. *From Harekrushna Mahtab*

Cuttack
April 20, 1942

Dear Comrade,

Owing to some unavoidable reasons, I am not able to attend the A.I.C.C. meeting at Allahabad. Sri Biswanath Das goes there to represent all of us. For your information I give below some facts which will give an idea how things are getting on here and I shall be much obliged if you kindly help us in every way possible.

First of all, the question of refugees from Rangoon who number about a lac or more. These people have lost their all and here they are without any employment and many of them are without shelter even.

To add to this unemployment, the recent order of Government to immobilise all the boats except a few within twenty miles from the seacoast has thrown out of employment thousands of fishermen and others whose only source of livelihood was their boats. Removal of boats has also dislocated ordinary transport in the flooded areas to such an extent that there is likelihood of starvation in many

parts and the work of cultivation for the next year is practically at a standstill. All these are being done at the instance of military authorities.

Then there is the indication that surplus food-stuffs may be ordered to be removed beyond the reach of the enemy or else they may be destroyed. In Orissa it is very rare to find men who have more stocks than required for the consumption of the year. In order to deny food-stuffs to the enemy, it may be thought desirable to starve millions of men—a position which is not liked by anybody.

In some parts of Orissa troops have been stationed in villages for prosecution of some strategic schemes. Generally the behaviour of the troops is not objectionable and our people are becoming familiar with them gradually. In many parts military roads and aerodromes are being constructed and it is not known when and how those will come into use. There is not a single anti-aircraft gun anywhere in any town although there is blackout in the towns and in the villages even.

There is widespread panic amongst the townspeople and the villagers specially after the naval battle along the Orissa seacoast on the 6th April last. But gradually people are getting accustomed to a panicky situation that may arise.

On the 21st April, the Finance Minister in a public speech made a complaint that the military authorities did not consult nor even inform the Ministers of what they were doing. That speech was on the lines of the Forward Bloc policy and that has created a flutter in the Government circle. There is some activity of the Forward Bloc in Orissa supported by the workers from Bengal and the Ministry in Orissa which seems to have no effective voice in the Government's policy which is left to the Secretaries.

So far as the attitude of Government is concerned it is far from satisfactory. It seems that even now they do not want us to stand on our legs lest their prestige should suffer in any way. That they do not realise the gravity of the situation is evident. The following decision of Government regarding organisation of volunteers has been communicated to me and it will tell its own tale.

Government will welcome the cooperation of individuals in any organisations made under the control of Government or Government officers, for the protection of life and property, preservation of peace, etc., provided those individuals are willing to place themselves under the orders and control of the Government officers concerned.

Secondly, in places where at present there are no Government organisations, individuals who wish to take steps to guard their own and their neighbours' property, should be permitted to do so provided they are known to and approved by police or magistrates and are willing to agree that they will obey orders given to them regarding their functions by the police or the magistrates. Persons not approved should not be allowed to patrol. -

Organisations of persons who are not under the control of Government

officers or individuals who are not willing to place themselves under the orders of the Government officers, cannot be allowed to take upon themselves the duties of maintaining law and order, protecting the property of others, etc.

Congress Committees started on organising volunteers in the towns and villages but this decision of Government has upset everything. Of course there is no law at present to stop organisation on the above grounds but the provisions of the Defence of India Rules may be used to haul up persons in the work and in fact in many places this has been the case.

Definite instruction of the Working Committee is required on this point.

Then again recently Government in an order have asked all Government officers who occupy District (Board) Bungalows while on duty to take down the National Flag if they find it flying on the occupied bungalow. The reason given for this order is that all parties in India do not recognise the Congress flag as [the] National Flag. This order has placed the District Boards in a very awkward position. Of course this order is illegal and cannot save any occupant from criminal and civil proceedings for their demanding the property belonging to the District Board. But the order itself shows how the wind blows.

Under the stress of the abnormal situation the inefficiency of the Government specially of the I.C.S. Secretaries has become so evident and intolerable that one does not know where they will land us.

The recently expressed views of Rajaji have surprised all of us and our Ministers are very jubilant over it. To say the least, when clear united leadership is wanted, expression of diametrically divergent views is disastrous and if the Congress cannot prevent it then, in my humble opinion, Congress will undo itself.

Some of the speeches of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru as have been reported in the Press regarding scorched earth policy and guerilla warfare are not intelligible to the workers here. It seems the reality of the situation is not understood by our leaders at the top.

Yours sincerely,
Harekrushna Mahtab

Babu Rajendra Prasad
Allahabad.

195. *From J.B. Kripalani*

Allahabad
April 23, 1942

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I came yesterday before and found your letter awaiting me. I think Maulana Saheb will not be able to change the date of the Congress Committee now unless

he changes the date of the A.I.C.C. He has allowed in the beginning only one day for the Congress Committee. Afterwards, evidently, he did not think that one day would suffice for talking so he would forward the date. Maulana Saheb also has given a general invitation to the public to attend the A.I.C.C. meeting as visitors. This is the first time that such an invitation has been extended. The Acting Committee are working to that end. Maulana Saheb has also invited about 8 people to the meeting of the Congress Committee. I don't think any serious discussion will be possible in such an expanded Working Committee. One can't be very free; therefore, those who are always forward will have to meet themselves. I and Vallabhbhai would have worked for the present from the beginning.

You perhaps know that from Delhi I will go to Wardha, Bombay, and Poona. I informed Bapu about the course of the negotiations after he left. Incidentally I also wanted to know what attitude we were to take in future discussions of that sort. He appeared to think that our place was outside the Committee, not in it. He was greatly disturbed at this talk of guerilla warfare not only from the viewpoint of non-violence but internal peace. He thought that it will be an invitation to social parties (sic) to raise their forces under cover of resisting the Japanese aggression. Sardar was of the same view. So was Sankarrao. If I could have been down to Bapu I would have liked to discuss these matters with you in the light of the talks I had with Bapu and Sardar. But now I think we shall talk when we meet. My presence here is necessary.

Hope you are doing well.

With pranams,

Yours ever,
J.B. Kripalani

P.S Your room will be ready for you as usual.

196. *From Nalini Ranjan Sarkar*

1 Bhagwan Das Road
New Delhi
April 23, 1942

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I have noticed with great pleasure that you have been taking an active interest in the recent "Grow More Food" campaign. I am sending you under separate cover some papers which, I trust, will give you a fairly complete picture of the present position, Province by Province and crop by crop, indicate the nature of the problem and also show what we have been doing in the matter. I

hope these papers will be of some help to you in the campaign you are carrying on for increasing the production of food in India.

I shall be very much obliged if you will please go through these papers at your convenience and help me with your suggestions and advice as to what further may and should be done by us in making the campaign a complete success.

It is customary to treat all papers circulated to the Defence Council as confidential. I would, therefore, request you to treat my statement on the food position to the Council as such; in particular the figures regarding requirements of the Defence Services are strictly confidential.

I hope you are doing well.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,
Nalini R. Sarkar

Enclosures not included

197 *From Krishna Ballabh Sahai*

Hazaribagh
April 23, 1942

My dear Sir,

I have been wondering why you excluded me from the new Working Committee. I have tried several explanations but none has given me satisfaction. Your rejection amounts in my opinion to disapproval of my conduct in political life. I am therefore writing to you this letter.

Did you select only those who take special interest in working out the constructive programme? If the selection had been made on this principle it would have given me fullest satisfaction. But I find that those who have shown special aptitude for constructive programme are only Messrs. Jaglal Choudhary, Baidya Nath Choudhary, and Deepnarayan Singh. The rest have not shown greater interest in constructive work than myself. I am curious to know what interest in constructive programme have Messrs. Ram Charitra Singh, Ram Narayan Singh, Shyama Prasad Singh, Satya Narayan Singh and Binodanand Jha shown. So it seems that you did not rely entirely upon this principle for making the selection.

Is it upon the amount of work done by anyone during the last six months that you have selected him? I wish this were true. My records, I am sure, would not have shown less satisfactory than those of many others who have been chosen. I do not know definitely the records of others but I know what Babu Ram Narayan Singh has done after his release from jail. I do not think he has attended to Congress work in the town of Hazaribagh or outside for more than 15 days which works out at the rate of two days in a month.

Discussing his case particularly it seems to me that the choice fell upon him because you can ill afford to displease him. He reviled the Congress Ministry openly in the columns of the Press and condemned the members of the Provincial Working Committee when they nominated Babu Ram Prakash Lal against his wishes. When he was not selected Chairman of the Reception Committee of the Ramgarh session he offered *dharna* at your doors. And lo, what is his reward! Permanent seat on the Working Committee without doing any work and promise from you to back his claim for appointment as Minister when the time comes. Do you want that others should follow his example in order to succeed in political life?

But perhaps you will say that in making the selection you were guided by the consideration of age. I wish even this were true, but I find that Messrs. Binodanand Jha, Prajapati Mishra, Satya Narayan Singh and Baidya Nath Choudhary who are junior to me in age and were so in classes when we were in colleges have been nominated while the consideration of age was waived in my case.

Perhaps you will say that you wanted to have a homogeneous cabinet in which persons friendly to each other should sit and not a man like myself who is not well disposed towards Messrs. Bari, Binodanand Jha and Anugrah Babu, specially the last. But if my offence is that I am not in the good books of Anugrah Babu, have you cared to find out what Sri Babu's feelings are towards Binoda? If Sri Babu and Binoda can sit face to face, why should I not have been permitted to do so with Anugrah Babu? You know that there are political rivalries amongst the workers of your Province and if you wanted to hold the balance true between them you should have in equal proportion invited men from both sides.

But I may have been rejected on the ground that I am a party man and have been trying to organise a clique. But where is the proof to establish this proposition? Bari may have told you that I am responsible for the schism that now exists in the Santhal Parganas Congress between Gauri Shankar and Binoda. Will you kindly send for Gauri Shankar and ask him if ever I set him against Binoda or took any interest in the politics of his district? Will you again send for Babu Sukhlal Singh and ask him if Binoda did not show him the Secretariat files of my department during the time of Congress Ministry to paint me as a bureaucrat? I have been told that Anugrah Babu thinks that I have been trying to organise the Kayastha workers of the Province in proof whereof he says that I am friendly with Jadu Babu, Deoki Babu, Khalish Jee and Mathura Babu. Please ask Sri Babu what my connection is with Mathura Babu. I have not met him or Khalish Jee for over a year except when on the advice of Sri Babu I went to Mr. Russell to recommend Mathura Babu for appointment as Government Pleader of Gaya. It is true that I am friendly with Jadu Babu and Deoki Babu, but, pray consider whether a man who takes any interest in Congress work of Palamau and Ranchi can avoid them? It is strange that this charge should be brought against me whose connections are so intimate with Sharangdhar, Deobrat, Sardar Harihar Singh, Shyama—all Rajputs, and Sri Babu—a Bhumihaar. But if you thought that I was moving on wrong tracks why did you

not warn me even once? I asked you several times what were the charges brought against me but you always kept silent. Is it how you can correct Congress workers?

Probably you will say that when you read out the list to Sri Babu he did not ask you to include my name. But why should this business of backing me have been left to him? It is true, I am his man. But am I for that any the less your man? The initiative should have come from you.

I have finished saying what I had to say. I am not a candidate for nomination. In fact I have made up my mind to reject it if you offer it to me by force of circumstances. I consider the work in my district to be sufficiently attractive, important and engrossing. It is true that your rejecting me has humiliated me in the eyes of the workers and the public whom I have to carry along with myself and you know that a man's public importance facilitates his work. I have been conducting a paper called *Chhotanagpur Darpan* for which I have to raise subscription of Rs.1,000 per year to meet the deficit. The District Congress Committee also looks up to me for raising Rs.1,500 per year for meeting its expenses. I know that I shall receive a setback in my work. But it can't be helped since this is your will and pleasure.

I must confess that I felt hurt at being eliminated. When last time members of the Committee were elected and I failed to secure a sufficient number of votes I had this consolation that you wanted me but the electorate swayed by caste and party considerations rejected me; but this time I could not lay any flattering unction to my soul because you are undoubtedly the most conscious and conscientious voter of the Province. Anyway I have almost half got over the feelings of chagrin and am trying to become my former self again. But what stings my mind frequently is the sense that if one is not to get justice from you where else can it be had in Bihar.

I have twofold requests to make. If you like you may give me a reply. The second is that you must treat this letter as private and should show it to none if you don't tear it to pieces after reading it.

Yours affectionately,
K.B. Sahai

Dr. Rajendra Prasad
Sadaquat Ashram
Patna.

198. To Valmiki Choudhary

Darbhangha
24 April 1942

My dear Valmiki,

Starting from Patna on the night of 27 April and will reach Allahabad on 28 April. For two or three days I will be there and thereafter either on 30 April in the

night or on 1 May by any train I will go to Patna. After that during the whole month of May I will have to be on a tour of the Province. Even Sita Ram will not be with me. He will go to Vanasthali to escort Usha and Urmila back home. For that reason I am writing to you.

Yours,
Rajendra Prasad

199. *From Krishna Ballabh Sahai*

Camp: Patna
April 26, 1942

My dear Sir,

I did not post this letter because I did not like it to pass into any other hands than yours. I was to meet you tomorrow morning for this purpose but as I have no other business left I am asking Damodar to deliver it to you and am starting for Hazaribagh.

I wanted to develop one or two points arising from the letter in the course of conversation but I shall now send them to you by post.

I don't expect a reply *** you like to send me. I myself wanted to acquaint you with my views.

If you want me to attend A.I.C.C. meeting at Allahabad, you may kindly send words through Damodar.

Yours affectionately,
Krishna Ballabh Sahai

***Illegible

200. *To K.T. Shah*

Sadaquat Ashram
Patna
May 25, 1942

My dear Professor Shah,

Pray excuse me for not writing to you so long. I have been running about having a hurricane tour in some places of Bihar where communal riots have taken place and communal tension exists, and that is the reason for not being able to write to you promptly. I am glad that the Government of Bihar have

expressed their appreciation in some form and I am still more glad that you have seen your way to accepting it.

It is distressing to read that communal trouble has broken out again at Bombay and Ahmedabad. It has never ceased at Dacca since it began. In Bihar things are quiet just at present but tension persists. One does not know what to do to prevent these outbreaks. It seems some people like it and give it active encouragement. The work of peace-makers becomes very difficult as it becomes more or less [a] onesided affair. However we have to do all we can. You must be passing through very anxious times.

As regards your son, he will always be welcome. You have only to let me know when he is coming and what he proposes to do exactly.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

Sj. K.T. Shah
8 Laburnam Road
Gamdevi, Bombay-7

201. To Valmiki Choudhary

Wardha
27 May 1942

My dear Valmiki,

Blessings! Received your letter. At the time of my departure for this place Chakradhar told me that doctors had given him advice for hospitalisation, but I had no idea that it would be so soon. However, whatever is done is done for the better. Please write to me in detail what the doctor says. For what period he will have to be there and whether there has been any relapse of the old ailment and what sort of treatment is going on? Do write all about these things. I will have constant worry. Now that you will be there, see that Chakradhar does not have any sort of difficulty. Write also the date by which you want to go to Deoghar. In a way everything has been settled there. I will perhaps return by 15 July because the Working Committee and the Rashtrabhasha Prachar Samiti will be having their meetings from 6 July and 12 July respectively. Only after that I will go. Health is all right.

Rajendra Prasad

[In the same postcard:]

My dear Chakradhar,
Blessings!

I came to know from Valmiki's letter that you are in the hospital. Good that it has come about. Get all the developments written to me, otherwise I will be in

constant worry. I will perhaps return by 15 July as I am engaged now in the Charkha Sangh. I had no talk with revered Babu. Now probably I will be able to meet him tomorrow.

Rajendra Prasad

202. *To R.A.E. Williams*

Sadaquat Ashram
Dighaghat
Patna
May 28, 1942

Dear Mr. Williams,

The Bihar Provincial Congress Working Committee had appointed a Sub-Committee with Shri Deepnarayan Sinha, M.L.A., as its convener for investigating complaints that had been received about prices of some necessary articles of everyday use and the steps taken to control prices. The Sub-Committees visited many important centres in the Province and after investigation made a report, a copy of which I am forwarding to you for consideration of the Government.

I have myself been touring in the Province and have already visited the districts of Darbhanga, Saran, Muzaffarpur, Purnea, Bhagalpur, Santhal Parganas, Monghyr, and Gaya. At each place I have visited I have made it a point to discuss the question with the local traders and also with the public and the impression left on me as a result of these discussions generally confirms conclusions and the suggestions of the Sub-Committee. I desire to emphasise, however, some points which require immediate attention of the Government.

1. I have found that in most places the stock of salt is inadequate and unless replenished soon there will be a scarcity of salt and consequent suffering to the people. The large dealers at Kheera and Sambhar do not supply salt to mofussil traders at the rates fixed by the Government but charge a large amount extra per wagon of salt which adds very considerably to the price which the dealer in Bihar has to pay. The Price Control Officer however does not take this extra payment into consideration in fixing the price and the result is a shortage which may become very serious in a short time. I am told that this extra payment comes to as much as Rs.500 per wagon at Sambhar where the price fixed is Rs.511 or nearly 100%. At Khewra the extra payment comes sometimes to Rs.1,000 per wagon where the price fixed is also something like Rs.1,015 or so. Unless immediate steps are taken to ensure a regular supply at a fair price, great hardship to the general public is apprehended. I do not know if there is sufficient salt available in the country to meet its requirement and the shortage caused by the stoppage or reduction of import from Aden and Liverpool and other foreign sources is made

up by extra production in the country. If the shortage is not made up steps should be taken to encourage and ensure extra production. May I make the following suggestions for consideration and necessary action by the Government.

A. Steps should be taken to ensure that salt is made available at the sources of supply to the dealers in Bihar at prices fixed by the Government. This can be done by the Provincial Government appointing its own agents to purchase salt at the source and to supply it to the leaders in Bihar at prices fixed by the Government. Difficulty is experienced in securing wagons for transporting the salt from the source of supply to centres in Bihar. The Provincial Government should arrange with the Railway Department for an adequate supply of wagons and for distribution of the available wagons so that the transport on a fair basis to various centres from the most convenient sources of supply may be ensured. In this connection it will have to be borne in mind that different qualities of salt are popular in different localities and supply of the quality most favoured in a particular locality should be ensured. During the last Great War I believe the local Government had appointed its own agents for sale of salt and I believe the system worked satisfactorily. Something on the same lines may be tried again.

B. Additional and new sources of supply should be tapped. In some districts of Bihar a great deal of salt used to be manufactured from earth by a particular caste known as *Nonia*. They used to produce saltpetre also from the same material. I am not in a position to say to what extent this source can be utilised, but I would earnestly request that this requires investigation and should be encouraged. If the law relating to this requires modification it should be modified to remove all difficulties in the way so that this may be developed. If licences are required, they should be freely granted. If the salt so manufactured requires further purification to make it fit for human consumption and the village *Nonia* does not know the art or possess the necessary equipment for it, the Government may encourage businessmen to start a refinery or start one of its own. I may mention that I have known such salt being manufactured in good quantities in the districts of Saran, Muzaffarpur and Champaran and there are probably other places where salt can be so manufactured.

2. Much complaint is heard about Kerosine oil. Difficulty about the supply of kerosine is bound to increase but so long as supply is available there is no reason why effective steps should not be taken to ensure its sale at fair price to consumers. I am told that at several places there is considerable stock but it is not available for sale and whatever is available sells at prices higher than that fixed by the Control Officer.

3. The small trader who sells retail cannot get supply at controlled prices from wholesale dealers but he is the person who is persecuted and has to bear the brunt of the law. This should be remedied.

4. Stock of rice is small in Gaya and may run short after a month or so unless replenished. The traders say that on account of uncertainty they are afraid to accumulate stock. The uncertainty is due to war conditions and price control. There would be no difficulty, they say, if they can be assured that their stock

would not be requisitioned and care would be taken in fixing the price to see that they are not made or expected to sell at a loss. In this connection my own suggestion is that the Government should arrange for a supply to the dealers in Bihar at the source of the articles the price of which is controlled at prices on the basis of which the price is fixed in centres of Bihar. Unless the price at the source is effectively controlled and regular supply assured at that price to the dealers in Bihar price control in centres of Bihar cannot be effectively enforced. If it is effectively controlled, there will be no supply as has happened in the case of some articles, as no trader will indent articles and sell them [at a] loss.

Another method which the Government should adopt is to open its own depots where all controlled articles may be available at the controlled price. This will have the effect of regulating the price in the whole market and the public may not have to suffer for want of the articles in the market. The Government will also find out from experience the difficulty which an ordinary trader has to face in getting a supply and this experience will be helpful in fixing a fair price.

Shri Deepnarayan Sinha, Secretary of the Bihar Provincial Congress Committee and of its Sub-Committee, will be at your disposal for any discussion that you may require. I am going out on tour in the remaining districts of the Province but can make myself available, if so required.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

R.A.E. Williams, Esq., I.C.S.
Controller of Prices
Patna.

Enclosure not included

203. *To Mr. Russelley*

Sadaquat Ashram
Dighaghat
Patna
May 28, 1942

Dear Mr. Russelley,

At Gaya I came to know that lands belonging to a large number of cultivators belonging to many villages near about the aerodrome were taken over by the Government and no payments had been made to them. I visited the place and met villagers from some 40 villages. It appears that land is being acquired for military purposes. Notices for acquisition of land and calling upon the owners to lodge

their claims for compensation have been issued only in two villages while land has been already taken into possession in a large number of them. I understood from the people assembled that in some of the villages practically the whole of the cultivable and cultivated lands had been thus acquired, while in most others a greater part of the land was taken over. Their houses and the *bustee* area have not been touched. As most of the residents of these villages are either cultivators or agricultural labourers, they have been reduced to a position in which they have no means of subsistence left to them. All or most of the agricultural land having thus been taken away from them, it is impossible for them to live where they have been living and it is desirable to acquire also the houses of those who desire to shift elsewhere. Many of them also expressed fear on account of the close proximity of their residential dwellings to military establishment and complained that they have practically no land left even for egress [from] and ingress [into] the *bustee*. As no compensation has been paid to anyone so far and not even notices have been issued in many villages there is widespread apprehension among the villagers there that no compensation would be paid. I told them that the Government would pay fair compensation and that whatever delay there was would be on account of the formality of making the investigation and fixing a fair price. To remove all apprehension and to give a just and fair deal to the villagers concerned may I make the following suggestions for the favourable consideration of the Government and for urgent action so that the sufferings of those who are thus deprived of their only means of subsistence may be reduced?.

1. The fixation of price and payment of compensation should be expedited so that if the villagers have to shift elsewhere they may do so before the rains and may, if possible, take other land and cultivate the rainy season crop.

2. In the district of Gaya some of the bigger landlords have large quantities of land in their Khas cultivation. The Government should take some of their land and settle it with the cultivators who are dispossessed, on fair terms. This will not cause much hardship to the landlords and will enable those who have been deprived of their all to settle down in life in different surroundings.

3. Where the greater portion of the cultivable land is taken over and the land left over is but a small portion which cannot support all the residents of the place, the portion left over should also be acquired so that the residents may shift elsewhere. It would be better to move the whole population to another locality where sufficient land may be settled with them than to leave them where they are without land or with small bits which are wholly inadequate.

4. The houses and residential quarters of those who are willing to shift should also be acquired. But care should be taken to see that no one is deprived of his dwelling house against his will and without adequate compensation.

5. While the investigation is going on advance payment on account should be made so that the persons affected may take steps for finding alternative means of subsistence.

As the rainy season is approaching immediate steps should be taken to avoid not only suffering to a large number of people but also prevent the problem of

feeding and housing these people from arising during the rainy season when it will become ever so much more difficult to tackle it.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

204. *From Krishna Ballabh Sahai*

Hazaribagh
July 26, 1942

My dear Sir,

Your kind letter dated 23 July offering me a seat on the Working Committee of the Provincial Congress Committee was to hand yesterday. My feeling in the matter is that I deserved to be included in the original list of nomination in preference to several of my more fortunate friends. That position having been denied to me I have contented myself with not occupying any position of responsibility in the politics of the Province. In the circumstances I very much regret that I would not be able to accept your kind offer.

I am going to Patna on the 31st. I would not be able to reach in time to attend the meeting of the Provincial Congress Committee because my train arrives [at] Patna 45 minutes after the meeting would have been started. But if you can give me 10 minutes *exclusively* I would discuss the matter further with you.

An important British owned mica concern wants to sell a little less than half of its shares to politically minded Indian businessmen who may preferably be Biharis. It has sought my help. If you don't see any objection in my helping it I would seek your assistance to approach such businessmen as you consider desirable. I would like to talk over the matter with you on the 31st.

As regards the information sought by you regarding slaughter of cattle in Chhotanagpur I regret I have not as yet received any more which is worth sending to you. I am going to Ranchi for this purpose on the 28th and shall write to you from there.

Yours affectionately,
Krishna Ballabh Sahai

Dr. Rajendra Prasad
Sadaquat Ashram
Patna.

205. *To Krishna Ballabh Sahai*

Sadaquat Ashram
Dighaghat
Patna
July 28, 1942

My dear Krishna Ballabh,

I have just received your letter dated 26th July '42. In the resignation of Shri Ramcharitra Sinha the suggestion is that I constituted the Working Committee in such a way as to give support to one particular party as against another. In the resignation of Shri Shyamaprasad Sinha it is said that he alone of his party was put on the Working Committee and no one else. For these reasons the two members resigned. They were asked to reconsider the resignation but declined to do so. I was informed by Shri Kirti Narayan Sinha among others that some people were being approached to lodge protest against my action in nominating the Working Committee. I also heard that there was going to be a concerted move on the part of some members. From your letter it appears that you do not wish to join the Working Committee because you think that you should have been included in the first list and since that was not done you do not wish to join the Working Committee now. I do not know if this action of yours is also in pursuance of that concerted move. When we met at Tarapur I asked you to attend the Working Committee meeting as I had already written to you to that effect and you had received that letter. You promised to me that you would be coming after fulfilling the engagement which you had at Kodarma but you did not come. Was that absence also in any way connected with this? Please let me have a line in reply.

I am awaiting with interest the information which you have been collecting there and hope you will send it soon.

Regarding the proposal of the mica mine owner I think it is desirable to have a discussion.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

206. *To Valmiki Choudhary*

Sadaquat Ashram
Patna
29 July 1942

My dear Valmiki,

Blessings!

Received your letter. As soon as I reached Patna I came to know that on reaching home you fell ill. Besides, there was a letter from Suresh Babu about

you. I have already written to the people at Deoghar. If you go there, I don't think you will have any sort of trouble or difficulty. Have no worries about that place.

As a matter of fact malarial fever sometimes makes one very weak, but there is nothing to worry about. I have come to know that the doctor there under whose treatment you are, is a good doctor and so I hope that you will get well very soon. Go on taking medicines etc. according to his prescription and be sure to observe continence regarding diet. So long as there is no remission of fever and weakness continues, do not go to Deoghar.

My health had run down at Wardha itself and has gone worse after my arrival here. In place of Vaidyaji's medicine, medicines prescribed by Dr. Banerjee¹ and Dr. Sharan² are being administered. But I find no apparent improvement and I propose to resume Vaidyaji's medicine. The greatest merit of that medicine is that it does not allow any loss of vitality. In view of the present condition of my health my journey to Bombay is postponed. But there is no cause for worry.

Under the proposal that has been passed by the Provincial Congress Working Committee on the lifting of disciplinary restrictions, disciplinary proceedings against many will be dropped. But I cannot recollect quite clearly what Suresh Babu's case was. If he comes here on the 31st, he will surely meet me; otherwise he can write to me on this matter. I will get the proper procedure adopted, after investigation. No injustice should be allowed to be done to him.

Please keep on informing me about you.

Yours,
Rajendra Prasad

¹Dr. T. N. Banerjee.

²Dr. Raghunath Sharan.

CORRESPONDENCE

PART II

1. *From Mahatma Gandhi to Prabhavati*¹

January 6, 1940

Chi. Prabha,

I have your letter. It is enough for me that you reached there safe. We shall meet again when God wills. Go on doing your work without worrying. How is Rajendra Babu's health? Sushila has left. Rajkumari has arrived but will go to Madras on the 9th and return after the 15th. Ba is well enough. I am of course all right.

Blessing from
Bapu

¹Wife of Jayaprakash Narayan

2. *From Dr. Gopichand Bhargava to Abul Kalam Azad*

Lajpatrai Bhawan
Lahore
January 10, 1940

Respected Maulana Sahib,

As desired by you I phoned you last night. I told you that as far as the question of nomination by the Congress was concerned it was not the party consideration that actuated me to express an opinion that Pandit Thakurdutt be nominated in preference to Srimati Shanno Devi. I had also submitted that whatever she represented was not correct. The recommendation of the W.C. was unanimous. Shanno Deviji had canvassed individually almost all the members of the W.C. and members of Assembly Party. But in spite of all this, you thought it proper to believe her and nominate her.

I had formerly received a telegram from Sardar Patel approving nomination of Pandit Thakurdutt. After the receipt of the telegram I had worked for Vaidji. Now I am told that Vaidji's name is not approved by you and Sardar Sahib has also cancelled his approval. I feel that it humiliates me in the eyes of my friends and those whom I addressed only on Sunday.

I feel very strongly that nomination of Srimati Shanno Devi is not in best interests of Congress. Now it is said it is due to party politics that we did not nominate her, but where was party politics when Mrs. Dunichand was nominated by her party friends from the very seat she had contested against a Congress

candidate? It is not a personal humiliation that I feel but I think it is humiliation of the big institution that such a person has been nominated.

I do fully realise that it is the Central Parliamentary Board whose will is to prevail and we have only to recommend. And it is therefore that their commands are being obeyed.

But I feel that it is not possible for me now to work as a member of the Assembly. Therefore I am submitting my resignation to you.

In all humility, I would request you to forward it to the Governor.

I would also like to add that it is not out of anger or in haste that I am taking this step. But I feel that there is no other alternative left for me.

I must thank you and other members of the Central Parliamentary Board for the consideration they have shown me during these last 3 years.

With best regards,

Yours very sincerely,
Gopichand Bhargava

Enclosure not included.

3. *From Mahatma Gandhi to Prabhavati*

Sevagram, Wardha
January 19, 1940

Chi. Prabha,

I have your letter. Vijaya's address is: Ambla via Songarh, Kathiawar.

Your work will not suffer in the least if you stay there for a month. What would happen if you were bed-ridden, or if you had to go to help father? It will be better to come here now and improve your health than to be forced to come here after it is already broken down. If you ask Rajen Babu, he too will give you the same advice. As to your question how you should work there, the answer is simple enough. If you get even one or two women who will spin willingly and sincerely you should labour for them as best as you can. You should also go from door to door selling as much khadi as possible. Get a few women together and form a bhajan party, and teach them how to read and write. Go among the poor women also and spread literacy among them. Go to the Harijan quarters and meet the women there. Thus you can widen the sphere of your work as much as you wish provided your health remains good enough. By and by other women also will join you. But the fact is that your health is not strong enough. Nor can you make adequate preparation. It appears to you that you have no work because you have not chalked out a programme.

We had a lot of rain here.

Sushila is in Delhi.

Blessings from
Bapu

4. *From Mahatma Gandhi to Bharatan Kumarappa*

Sevaon
January 29, 1940

My dear Bharatan,

The facts are these. I was and am still willing to present myself at Ramgarh on 10th March. The W.C. thought that it would be no use sending me to R[amgarh] three days in advance. The crowds gathering will interfere with the arrangements. They will rob the show of its newness when the Presidential procession etc. takes place. There were other similar arguments advanced. You may send this to your correspondent. I am entirely in the Rashtrapati's hands. I have an open mind. Naturally I want to do all I can to further the common purpose. But I do not know what is the best thing to do. Rajen Babu should be the proper judge.

Love,
Bapu

5. *From Mahatma Gandhi to Sir Akbar Hydari*

March 21, 1940

Dear Sir Akbar,¹

I do not know if you are responsible for the orders against the State Congress. They leave a bad taste in the mouth. But there was a technical flaw in the Congress action. And so I advised unqualified apology. How I wish justice could be done in this case!

Hope you are keeping well

Yours sincerely,
M K. Gandhi

¹President, Ministers' Committee, Hyderabad State

6. *From Mahatma Gandhi to Prabhavati*

Sevagram, Wardha
April 11, 1940

Ch. Prabha,

I have your letter. I am glad that you have come to like the place. Take care of your health. Rajendra Babu has recovered. I am quite well.

I am writing to Jayaprakash.

Blessings from
Bapu

7. From Jawaharlal Nehru to Abul Kalam Azad

Bombay

April 20, 1940

Dear Mr. President,

I have to report to you about the activities of the National Planning Committee. It was our hope and intention to finish the preliminary work of this Committee within a year from its inception, but the magnitude of the task has prevented us from completing it within that period. I addressed last year's Congress President, Shri Rajendra Prasad, on this subject and he was good enough to extend the period for our report. The National Planning Committee at their last session appointed 29 sub-committees on various subjects. Each of these sub-committees in effect has to deal with an important sphere of economic and other activity and there has been great delay in the sub-committees presenting their reports. This has reacted on the National Planning Committee which cannot proceed with its work till it has received the reports of its sub-committees. Because of this reason, we have repeatedly had to postpone our meetings.

The full Committee is now meeting on the 1st May and will probably continue in session for two weeks. We have now received full reports from 5 sub-committees, namely: (1) Heavy Engineering, (2) River Training and Irrigation, (3) Labour, (4) Population, (5) Horticulture.

Interim reports have been received from the following sub-committees: (1) Chemicals, (2) Public Finance, (3) Transport.

Final or interim reports are expected within the next few days from the following sub-committees: (1) Rural Marketing, (2) Industrial Finance, (3) Housing, (4) Animal Husbandry, (5) Communications, (6) Currency and Banking, (7) Insurance, (8) Manufacturing Industries.

Apart from the above-mentioned sub-committees, there still remain 13 sub-committees to report. The next meeting of the National Planning Committee will consider such reports and interim reports as are placed before it and may also discuss some general issues of policy. After that we shall have to give some more time to the remaining sub-committees for their reports. When all the reports have come in, they will have to be considered together and the final report of the Planning Committee itself drafted and considered. All this is likely to take at least 4 to 5 months more, and may be 6 months. In view of the critical political situation, it is possible that our work may suffer or be delayed. It is our desire, however, to complete as rapidly as possible the work of the sub-committees so that all the material may be ready for any future use.

We have tried to carry on our activities within the limits of our restricted finances. This has often resulted in delay. Owing to the expansion of our work and the heavy burden that this has cast on us, our expenses have been considerable. And yet I would venture to say that work has been carried on far more economically than is usually possible under such circumstances. We have carried

on our work for a year and five months with funds which were intended for half this period. Our present resources will probably be exhausted about the end of June. It is necessary for us, therefore, to arrange for further contributions for another four or five months and, in particular, for the printing of our own report and the reports of the 29 sub-committees. This planning is likely to be a heavy item in our budget.

I am giving you this information of our financial position so that you may be in touch with developments in the National Planning Committee. I am not making a request for a grant from the Congress funds. It is our desire not to burden the Congress with this expenditure insofar as we can help it. We have avoided of course accepting any money from any private or non-official agencies so far, as this was not considered proper by us. We have depended solely on contributions from Provincial Governments and some State Governments (Hyderabad, Mysore, Baroda and Bhopal). It may be that these Governments might help us a little still further. I am addressing them on the subject.

Our office is sending to the A.I.C.C. office copies of the reports of the sub-committees received by us so far.

In view of the circumstances mentioned above, I would beg of you to extend the time for the submission of our report. I cannot suggest any definite time but provisionally it might be fixed at the end of September 1940, or, to be on the safer side, till the end of the year.

There is a considerable demand from the Press and the public for the reports of our sub-committees. We have so far treated them as confidential but it is difficult to keep them so, as unauthorised reports go to the Press and sometimes mislead the public. It is our intention, therefore, to issue a brief synopsis of our sub-committees' report to the Press after the report has been presented to the N.P.C. I trust you approve of this procedure. The sub-committees' report or the synopsis will of course in no way bind the National Planning Committee, much less the Congress. It is just a report of certain experts appointed for a particular task. This fact will be made clear.

It is quite likely that in these sub-committees' reports there will be considerable variety of opinions and sometimes even conflict in regard to vital matters of principle. This is inevitable, as the number of people working in the N.P.C. is large and represents a variety of opinions. The N.P.C. will try to coordinate these opinions as far as possible, though this may not always be possible. And finally it will be for the Congress Executive to consider the N.P.C. report and give its own opinion in regard to it.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the General Secretary of the A.I.C.C. at Allahabad. As I have mentioned above, sub-committees' reports are also being sent to him, as I did not wish to burden you with this voluminous material. Should you, however, desire to have these reports or any other information, we shall gladly send them to you.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

8. From A. V. Thakkar to the Chief Secretary, Government of Bihar

HARIJAN SEVAK SANGH

Camp: Calcutta

31 July 1940

Dear Sir,

In August 1939 during the course of my tour in the Champaran district I visited the Criminal Tribes settlement at Chauterwa in that district in the company of our Provincial Secretary Shri Vindhyaeshwari Prasad Varma, M.L.A., and other local workers of the district. What I could see and hear about the settlement, I learnt that the conditions of the inhabitants of the colony required much improvement. It is an agricultural settlement and in spite of the large agricultural area attached to the settlement and the substantial sum spent by the Bihar Government on the settlement through the Salvation Army, the settlers made a large number of complaints in the presence of the manager of the settlement.

The Harijan Sevak Sangh is deeply interested in the well-being of the Criminal Tribes and if the Sangh is given charge of the settlement by the Government, by taking it over from the present management and handing it over to us on the same conditions, the Sangh would try its best to show an improvement on the present state of affairs.

I may also inform you that I had also moved the ex-Premier of Bihar and had written to him in the matter on the 17th August '39 (copy attached for ready reference), and the Premier had promised to consider our request sympathetically. I learn that the proposal was under consideration when his Government went out of office.

In this connection I may inform you that last year, in January '39, the Government of U.P. took over the charge of the big Criminal Tribes settlement of Gorakhpore from the Salvation Army and handed it over to the Local Harijan Sevak Sangh for management in the same month and I may be permitted to inform you that the management by the Harijan Sevak Sangh of the Criminal Tribes settlement at Gorakhpore has given complete satisfaction to the present Government in the U.P. While reporting to the U.P. Government on the working of the Criminal Tribes Act for the year 1939 in the Gorakhpore district, the District Magistrate remarked:

The Harijan Sevak Sangh took over the settlement in January '39 and I must say that an improvement has been effected. The behaviour of the Doms has improved and I have not received calls for assistance as happened continually when the settlement was under the Salvation Army.

While forwarding the above, the Asstt. to the Deputy Inspector General of Police (in charge of Criminal Tribes) wrote to the local Harijan Sevak Sangh as follows:

"Forwarded. The Harijan Sevak Sangh are to be congratulated on the steady improvement they have effected."

I hope you will please consider our offer favourably and let me know your decision at your earliest.

Thanking you,

Yours faithfully,
A.V. Thakkar
Gen. Secretary

Copies to:

- (1) Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Patna.
- (2) Shri V.P. Varma, M.L.A., Muzaffarpur.
- (3) Shri Bepin Bihari Varma.

Enclosure:

(Copy of letter from A.V. Thakkar to Sri Krishna Sinha)

HARIJAN SEVAK SANGH

Camp: Dak Bungalow, Motihari
Champaran Dist.
17th August 1940

Re: Criminal Tribes Settlement at Chauterwa in Champaran District.

My dear Sri Babu,

In the company of Vindhya Babu and a Motihari friend, I visited the Criminal Tribes settlement of Doms at Chauterwa, about 8 miles from Bagaha, a terminus of B.N.W. Railway in the N.W. corner of Champaran. This I could do between the hours of 7 and 8 p.m. on the 16th inst. The Salvation Army Manager, Major Morfjord, showed me round, as best as he could, in that dark hour. I am told though you had a mind to go and see it, you could not visit it when you visited Bettiah last. I wish you or at least Krishna Ballabh Babu can see the same at the earliest opportunity.

I was told that it is an agricultural settlement, that about 160 bighas or 320 acres of land are given to the settlement for rice cultivation and that the Government spends, or hands over to the Salvation Army for spending, an annual sum of as much as Rs.10,000. In spite of that, we heard a very large number of complaints in the presence of the manager, about very meagre areas of land handed over to each family of Doms for cultivation and many other complaints. The total number of persons—men, women and children—resident

in the settlement does not exceed 350. The number of families may be taken as not more than 60 or 70.

If the Government will be agreeable to resume the settlement, with its attached lands and buildings, from the management of the Salvation Army, and hand it over to the Harijan Sevak Sangh, for management through its Bihar Provincial Branch under exactly the present terms, the Sangh will, on its part, try to show much better results than at present

The U.P. Government C.T. settlement at Gorakhpore was, under identical circumstances, resumed by the Hon. Mr. Govind Ballabh Pant and handed over to the H.S. Sangh in the beginning of 1939, and on behalf of the Sangh Shri Mahabir Prasad Poddar and Principal Kunwar Bahadur, both of Gorakhpore, are now managing it, and, I may add, very satisfactorily. The distance between the two settlements is less than 70 miles. Similarly if this Chauterwa settlement be transferred to the H.S. Sangh, I can confidently say that the money now spent can be much better utilised and the reformation among Doms will be more speedy than before.

I have consulted (1) Shri Vindhya Babu, Muzaffarpur, and (2) Shri Harbans Sahay of Motihari, both M.L.A.s, and they have seen this letter and they are perfectly of the same mind as myself. If and when time comes, they will be prepared to share the burden of the management and arrange to engage competent staff for the purpose.

Will you be good enough to acknowledge this letter and to send me a provisional reply C/o Vindhya Babu, Muzaffarpur.

With best regards,

I am,
Yours sincerely,
A.V. Thakkar
Gen. Secretary

The Hon. Mr. Sri Krishna Sinha
Premier of Bihar, Ranchi.

9. *From Vindhyeshwari Prasad Varma to A.V. Thakkar*

Muzaffarpur
September 2, 1940

My dear Thakkar Bapa,

I am enclosing herewith a copy of letter addressed by Dr. A.S. Varma, Health Officer, Gaya Municipality, to Dr. Rajendra Prasad. He wants at least 2 competent Harijan workers who would do social service work among the

Harijans of Gaya Municipality. He is prepared to pay Rs.600 per year towards their expenses. It is very difficult to find good social workers among Harijans who have received any special training for the purpose. I therefore request you to let me know if you can send 2 such workers for work there. You may settle the terms of their service as you think proper

Dr. Rajendra Prasad has also asked me to write to you for this purpose.

Yours sincerely,
Vindhreshwari Pd. Varma

Sj A V. Thakkar
General Secretary
All India Harijan Sevak Sangh
Kingsway, Delhi.

Copy forwarded to Dr. Rajendra Prasad, New Hotel, Jaipur, for information

V P Varma

Enclosure not included

10. From the Assistant Secretary, Harijan Sevak Sangh, to Vindhreshwari Prasad Varma

HARIJAN SEVAK SANGH

Delhi
September 4, 1940

My dear Vindhya Babu,

Many thanks for your letter dated the 2nd September, enclosing a copy of Dr. A.S. Varma's letter dated 22nd August to Pujya Rajendra Babu. It is heartening to know that Dr. Varma is so much interested in the welfare of sweepers of his Municipality. But I have to respectfully confess that it is not possible to provide really good workers for the work which Dr. Varma has in mind. Work among the sweepers is one of the most difficult items of Harijan work and I am of the opinion that unless right type of workers are found the social work among them should not be attempted by any non-official agency. We require tactful and sincere men of balanced judgement. I have one or two workers in mind but I am afraid they cannot be entrusted safely to work among the sweepers in a right manner.

Shri Jagjivan Ramji has been very keen to start some work among the

sweepers in Bihar and he twice wrote to Bapa. I do not know if he has got some workers in view. But perhaps it may be worth while to write to him.

I am really sorry that we are not able to accept the offer of Dr. Varma, which he has so generously offered, for want of suitable workers. Please excuse.

Yours sincerely,
(Sd.)
Asstt. Secretary

Shri Vindhyaeshwar Prasad Varma, M.L.A.
Secretary, Bihar H.S. Sangh
Muzaffarpur.

Copies to

- (1) Dr. Rajendra Prasad, C/o. Sh. Jamnalal Bajaj, Sikar.
- (2) Dr. A.S. Varma, M.B., D.P.H., Health Officer, Gaya Municipality, Gaya.

11. *From the General Secretary, A.I.C.C., to the Secretary, Assam Provincial Congress Committee*

Camp: Sevagram
January 23, 1941

Your letter to Mahatmaji. You perhaps do not know that instructions have been issued to the Congress Members of the Punjab Legislature to withdraw from the Punjab Assembly. This means that those who for any reason have not offered Satyagraha, should no more attend the Assembly and participate in it. Mahatmaji's view is that the same rule should apply to Assam and Bengal also. You yourself think that the attendance of the remaining members will not only be useless but humiliating. Under these circumstances you will please instruct the remaining Congress M.L.A.s in your Province to refrain from attending future meetings of the Assembly.

J.B. Kripalani
General Secretary
All India Congress Committee

The Secretary
Assam Provincial Congress Committee
Gauhati.

12. *From the Secretary, U.P.P.C.C., to the Bihar Provincial Congress Committee*

Lucknow
February 20, 1941

PROVINCIAL CONGRESS
PATNA

PLEASE REQUEST RAJENDRABABU WIRL DATES ASSEMBLY BYELECTION
MEETINGS FYZABAD DIVISION CONTEST KEEN

SECRETARY CONGRESS

13 *From Parasnath Sinha to Mahatma Gandhi*

BIHAR PROVINCIAL HINDI-PRACHARINI SABHA

Pirmuhani
P.O Kadamkuan
Patna
June 14, 1941

Revered Mahatmaji,

Most respectfully I beg to forward to you a cutting from the Patna daily, the *Indian Nation*, containing an article on Hindustani written by Pandit Avadh Bihari Lal, M.A., B.L.* I would further request you to note that it is only one of many such articles which have recently been published in the different journals of Bihar, and it will serve to indicate the strong public feeling against Hindustani which is calculated to do immense harm to Hindu culture and civilization if not checked in time. I hope you will kindly look into the matter dispassionately and do the needful.

Yours truly,
Parasnath Sinha
General Secretary
for Bihar Provincial Hindi-Pracharini Sabha

14. *From A. V. Thakkar to Binodanand Jha*

HARIJAN SEVAK SANGH

Camp: Ranchi

July 31, 1941

My dear Binoda Babu,

Though you are in jail, and I a free man, I am awaiting your services when you will be released, for some work for the aborigines in Santhal Parganas.

I hope your health is good all these months and that you have not lost in weight. Even if you have lost a few pounds or seers in weight, that will add to your usefulness. By God's grace I am doing well, though my eyesight is weakening, slowly but surely.

If you will give my best regards to all friends with you - Sri Babu, Anugrah Babu, Jaglalji, Krishna Ballabh, Jagjivan Babu, Jagat Babu, Vindhya Babu, and others, I will feel much obliged to you.

Soon after you come out, I wish to wander in the aboriginal parts of your favourite S.P. in your company and under your guidance, and try to serve them by opening a few centres of work. I know some friends have already begun some work in the northern and eastern parts of the district, but I do not know them, nor have seen their work. I hope to do so in your company by about two weeks' tour and also decide to start new centres of work, especially among the Pahariyas in the north and in Daman-i-Koh and in Raj Mahal. The work is long delayed and I must start it before I am incapacitated by old age.

I am told you will come out on some day in September and you can propose to me to tour some time in October or November, as may be convenient to you. If you can give me the approximate time, I will fix up my other tours to suit that fixture.

You will be glad to know that I am drafting this letter in Gumla, Ranchi district, where Mathura Babu, Kshitish Basu, Nagendra Narayan Sinha, Shyamlal and myself are guests of Narayanji. Narayanji has been working for one year past among the Oraons of the western part of Ranchi for Khadi and Education and is a splendid worker. He is atoning for our past neglect in the treatment of our Munda, Oraon and Kharia friends. Along with the work of Kshitish and Ramraksha in Ranchi and the east, Naryanji's in the west, we are able to show something in the district, though I know that is nothing as compared with what the Christian Missionaries are doing.

I will not lengthen this letter, but close it with a prayer that God is keeping you all in Hazaribagh jail in good health and spirits and that I will be able to meet

them all in a month or two. Reply to this may be sent to Delhi.

With best regards,

Yours sincerely,
A.V. Thakkar

Shri Binodanand Jha, M.L.A.
Political prisoner
C/o Suptd., Jail
Hazaribagh.

Copies to:

- (1) Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Patna.
- (2) Secretary, Santhal Pahariya Sangh, Poriahath, Dt. Santhal Parganas.

15. *From A.V. Thakkar to Narayanji*

HARIJAN SEVAK SANGH

Camp. Nibaran Ashram
Ranchi
July 31, 1941

My dear Narayanji,

In continuation of the talk that we had on the morning of the 29th July, re centres of welfare work for the aborigines in the district of Ranchi, I am putting down the decisions reached between you and me, as a result of the discussions:

1. The amount available for the present is Rs. 833½ (2/3rds of the amount of Rs.1,250 made available from Shri Shantikumar N. Morarjee's donation for aboriginal work through Dr. Rajendra Prasad) + Rs.1,000 from Seth Govardhandas, Bombay, received through me, i.e. total Rs.1,833½.

2. The work to be carried from this fund will be utilised only for the education, medical aid and miscellaneous welfare of aborigines round about.

3. The financial year of the works will be from 1st October to 30th September.

4. For the present it has been decided to continue the following 4 out of 5 centres, already existing:

- (a) Karamtoli—1½ miles away in the suburbs of Gumla.
- (b) Tangardih—near Chainpur, in the north-west, 18 miles away on Surguja Road.
- (c) Tukkupani—1 mile from Simedega.
- (d) Tabhadiha—4 miles from Simedega.

(The eliminated centre at Choreya from this list will be conducted by the present staff of the A.I.S.A.)

5. The following 6 new centres will be started:

- (a) Adar or Banari, as may be suitable in Bishunpur Thana.
- (b) Palkot—about 15 miles from Gumla in the South.
- (c) Raidih—about 16 miles west of Gumla.
- (d) Bano—in extreme south-east of Gumla Sub-Division.
- (e) Phori—10 miles north of Gumla.
- (f) Kurdeg—South-west of Sirmedega, about 80 miles from Gumla.

Each of the above 10 centres will have day and night schools with facilities of medical work and propaganda for better living, by the teachers.

6. Only M.E. passed, preferably trained teachers, should be appointed. Those who are only M.E. passed may be sent for training later on.

7. The following budget of expenditure will be sanctioned:

Non-recurring

Rs.10 to each centre towards the construction of school buildings etc.

Rs.15 to each centre for equipment—blackboard, furniture, library books, etc.

Total: Rs.25.

Recurring

A. Rs.5 p.m. —stipend to each teacher for three months' training—October to December

Re.1 for miscellaneous expenses in training—3 months.

Total: Rs.6 p.m.

B. Rs.8 p.m.—pay of untrained teachers
or Rs.10 p.m.—pay of trained teachers.

Re.1—lighting expenses in Night Schools.

Re.-/ 8/-p.m.—stationery, postage, etc.

Say, Rs.10 or Rs.12 p.m. to each school.

C Rs.5 p.m.—T.A. etc. for supervision in addition to the T.A. to be met by the A.I.S.A.

Re.1 p.m.—for medical aid per school.

Total: Rs. 6 p.m.

8. As in most of these places there are already Khadi centres or are to be started, it will be possible for us to have better supervision and greater mass contact with the aborigines. In fact both these constructive activities are and will be supplementary to each other.

9. The following annual budget is approved from 1st October 1942 to 30th September 1942:

Non-recurring	$10 \times 25 =$	250-0-0
Recurring		
(a) Training of teachers	$10 \times 3 \times 6 =$	180-0-0
(b) Teachers' pay	$10 \times 12 \times 9 =$	1,080-0-0
(c) T.A. of Shri Narayanji	$5 \times 12 =$	60-0-0
(d) Medical aid	$10 \times 2 =$	120-0-0
	Total:	<hr/> 1,690-0-0 <hr/>

One thousand six hundred and ninety only.

10. As usual the grant from Delhi will be sent from Delhi on receipt of monthly accounts and reports.

Wishing you all success in your service of the aborigines of Ranchi district.

Yours sincerely,
A.V. Thakkar

Shri Narayanji
Seva Kendra
Gumla, Ranchi Dt.

Copies to:

1. Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Patna.
2. Bihar H.S. Sangh, Patna.
3. Shri K.C. Basu, Ranchi.

16. *From Sadik Ali to J.B. Kripalani*

Wardhaganj
August 6, 1941

KRIPALANJI
CARE CONGRESS
PATNA

GAYA WIRES FIXED EIGHTEENTH WIRE ACCEPTANCE

SADIK ALI

17. *From R. Mandeswara Sarma to Shyamlal, Asstt. Secretary, Harijan Sevak Sangh*

THE ANDHRA PROVINCIAL ZAMIN RYOTS' ASSOCIATION
(Hill Tribes Section)

Koovur
W. Godavari
August 18, 1941

Dear Sir,

I have returned just last night from Anantagiri Agency, i.e. belonging to the Vijayanagaram Estate and lying in the Srinagavarapukota Taluk adjoining to our Madgole Agency, having gone there to enquire into their difficulties and study conditions on their personal invitation. I am preparing a report of my enquiry. Meanwhile, let me state that I have introduced one hundred more Taklis during our visit in addition to one hundred people already spinning.

I wanted to send my scheme after this visit, so that, whatever I wanted to do may be useful to both the areas.

After publication in the hills, consultation with some friends, I have prepared the following scheme and fixed the 9th September 1941 to start work as the same.

1. To acquire some site at the terminus of the Garikibanda-Kotapadu footpath just near the metal road running from Vaddadi to Madgole.
2. To erect a small pandal or shed for the time being on it.
3. To start a school for Hill Tribes boys.
4. To transfer our present Khaddar and Spinning Implements Store and our Sub-Office to this place.
5. To appoint one pracharak competent to do the work of the above and also one supervising aged worker.

I give the following estimate of costs for one year, adjusted within your grant:

1. Teaching and supervising grant @ Rs. 10 p.m.	120-0-0
2. Cost of site about 1,000 yds.	25-0-0
3. Cost of erecting pandal (palm trees and leaves being promised to be given by local people)	30-0-0
4. Office expenses	40-0-0
5. Addition to the capital of the present Khaddar Stores (the present capital being Rs.50 only)	35-0-0
	<hr/>
	250-0-0

Let me add the following details regarding the scheme. The place selected is the nearest possible site to Garikibanda (i.e. being some five miles to Bankibanda, the foot of the hills). It has good water supply and a healthy atmosphere and is on the roadside, being within easy access for inspection.

There are already about twenty hill young men who studied up to 1st or second standard and who are very earnest to improve even by coming to our Headquarters Office (i.e. at Koovur).

I am quite sure that I can start the school with at least fifteen young men who can afford to get their rations from their hill homes. If necessary we will try for their food in the neighbouring villages.

I have selected two members from my Workers' League and got them exempted from offering further Satyagraha. They are very sincere workers of long standing. They have been doing good Khadi work. The young man selected to be the resident teacher has been running a spinning school for the last two years in his village which is in the neighbouring taluk. He knows chording also. He can teach up to the eighth standard. He is very earnest to undertake the responsibility and or service sake and he is one of those students who underwent training under me during last year at "Dimile" camp. The education will include spinning, chording, writing of representations and the reports, and some knowledge in agriculture useful in the hills and if possible anti-malarial precautions also.

Through your help I have now the opportunity to consolidate what little I achieved by my work for the last four years. The seeds are thrown. I believe they have a great future. I don't like to use big words now. I have only given you a brief outline. In the first month's report after starting the work I will give you minute details of the work started and to be started. I have made everything ready for the 9th September, including announcement in the hills. I have my monthly inspection tour to these parts for the last three years and when necessary I am going even twice a month. I assure you on behalf of the Provincial Zamin Ryots' Association and the Sramik Dharma Sadhak Sangh that the concern will go on quite well. I have spent about Rs.350 (Rs.225 plus Rs.125 to some for which office accounts are not kept) of my own money for this work up till now. I am now gladly prepared to transfer this sum under the contribution head.

I hope this scheme will be satisfactory to you. It took fifteen days to settle it. It is the only course possible at present. I am waiting for the receipt of the grant announced. I request that it may be sent at least before the 4th September so that I may surely start work on the 9th September.

Thanking you and Sjt. Dr. Babu Rajendra Prasad for the impetus given.

Yours sincerely,
R. Mandeswara Sarma

P.S. I am sending you a copy by bookpost of the report of our Provincial Zamin Ryots' Association passed at the fifth conference held on 26-7-41 at Tenu. It contains separate accounts of the Hill Tribes section. They are audited and

certified to be correct. Please refer to pages 17 to 46. My friend Mr. Laxminarayan will kindly translate the matter and oblige. I saw your p.c. dated 12/8/41 today.

Yours sincerely,
R. Mandeswara Sarma

Enclosure not included

18. *From Narayanji to Shyamlal*

Seva Kendra
P.O. Gumla
August 30, 1941

Pranams.

I have your letter asking me my opinion about holding a conference of the aborigines. Personally myself I do not care what the detractors will say provided we hold the conference with a simple and honest motive of the uplift of the aborigines; but regarding the desirability of having a conference, I would request you to be guided by the opinion of Shri Kshitish Chandra Bose and Shri Ramrakshajee as they are in the centre and may well gauge what will be the after effect. So far [as] the actual holding of the conference is concerned, I may undertake the responsibility of holding it with some success. I am sure if Rajendra Babu accepts the presidentship and the conference is held sometime in the month of March and April, I shall be able to collect at least five thousand aborigines who will give a good account of themselves in the meeting. Of course you will have to meet the expenses which will not exceed the amount of Rs.200.

Hope this will satisfy you.

Yours affectionately,
- Narayanji

P.S. It will be better if we can get the cooperation of Rai Saheb Bundi Ram also. But do not write to him straight, please talk through Kshitish Babu.

Narayanji

Shri Shyamlalji
Harijan Sevak Sangh
Delhi.

Copies to:

1. Dr. Rajendra Prasad.
2. Shri A.V. Thakkar.
3. Shri Kshitish Bose.

Shyamlal
5-9-1941
Harijan Sevak Sangh
Kingsway, Delhi.

19. *From K.C. Basu to Shyamlal*

Nibaran Ashram
Ranchi
September 2, 1941

My dear Shyamlal Bhai,

Your letter No. 4851 dated the 26th August. I do agree with Sri Rajendra Babu and think that any big conference will not be possible now. We attempted such a one with Premier Sri Krishna Sinha as President. It was a failure in comparison with the conferences called by the Adibasi Mahasabha.

Again, regarding the Presidentship, Raja of Ramgarh, Dr. Sachchidanand Sinha, Seth J.K. Birla would be better choices than Rajendra Babu or such other political leaders, which will enable the other parties to give our mission a political colouring.

We should get time to create our influence by solid works of a longer period, when such conferences may be and should be held.

With pranams.

Yours sincerely,
K.C. Basu

Copies to:

1. Dr. Rajendra Prasad.
2. Bapa.
3. Shri Narayanji.
4. Shri Ramraksha Brahmachari.

Shyamlal
8-9-1941
Harijan Sevak Sangh
Delhi

20. *From S. Jagannathan, I.C.S., Under Secretary to the Government of Bihar, to the General Secretary, All India Harijan Sevak Sangh*

GOVERNMENT OF BIHAR
POLITICAL DEPARTMENT

P.O. Hinoo
Ranchi
3rd September 1941

Sir,

In reply to your letter No. 4904 dated the 28th August 1941, I am directed to say that the question of future management of the Chauterwa Dom Settlement is still under the consideration of the Provincial Government.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,

Your most obedient servant,
S. Jagannathan
Under Secretary to Government

Copies to:

1. Shri Bepin Bihari Varma, Betia State.
2. Shri S.P. Varma, Secretary, H.S. Sangh.
3. Dr. Rajendra Prasad.
4. Shri N.N. Sinha.
5. Shri A.V. Thakkar.

Shyamlal
9-9-1941
Harijan Sevak Sangh, Delhi

21. *From Mian Iftikhar-ud-Din to J.B. Kripalani*

PUNJAB PROVINCIAL CONGRESS COMMITTEE

Bradlaugh Hall
Lahore
September 10, 1941

My dear Kripalaniji,

I received your letter of the 5th, the day I was leaving Wardha. Hence this reply from the train. Yes, you are right that since the seat is being vacated for Sir Shadi

Lal, we need not bother about it. And in any case we feel no enthusiasm these days for contesting by-elections. Let the Bhai and Sir Shadi Lal do as they like.

You will please convey my reply to Rajen Babu who must have arrived at Wardha by now. I am writing to the Sardar myself directly to the same effect.

I am sorry that we could meet neither at Wardha nor at Bombay, where I did not go. Now we shall meet in Lahore in October. I have obtained Bapuji's permission and I hope you will not turn down our request now. I shall write about the date and other details of the tour later.

Yours sincerely,
M. Iftikhar-ud-Din

22 *From Raj Kumarlal to Shyamlal*

Ranchi
September 11, 1941

Dear Shyamlalji,

In reply to your letter No. 4851 of the 26th August last enquiring of me as to whether the holding of a conference of the aboriginals in the early part of 1942 was desirable, I have to inform you that it had been my desire for a long time to hold a conference of the representatives of the aboriginals before calling the big one and a small meeting—not of the representatives—was held here when Babu Anugrah Narayan Sinha and Babu Sri Krishna Sinha (ex-Ministers) and some Parliamentary Secretaries of the Congress Government were here and attended the said meeting; but I found that individual persons among them, i.e., the aboriginals, wanted to gain some favour and there was no desire to do the real work. After that I again tried for the same but could not do as amongst the non-Christian aboriginals there were two persons on whom I could rely—one was Rai Saheb Bandiram and the other was, rather is, Babu Theble Uraon. Both of them at first were in the Adibasi Sabha of Jaipal Singh which is now known to be a Sabha of the Christians only. After some time Theble Uraon left the Adibasi Sabha and now Rai Saheb Bandiram has been trying to cut off his connection with Jaipal Sabha but he is still hesitating to do so. As these two known persons were in the Adibasi Sabha of Jaipal Singh, so many non-Christians had followed them but now the non-Christians are trying to cut off all connection with the Sabha of Jaipal Singh but still there are many in this as well as in the other districts of Chhotanagpur division and in Santhal Parganas who are carried away by the word Adibasi Sabha and do not know the real motive of the missionaries and their flocks the Christians, whose sole aim is to bring the non-Christians under the influence of the Adibasi Sabha of the Christians. In order to make people understand all this I had to send Theble Uraon [to] other districts and again am sending him to Manbhum side where the Bhumij Munda, Kora, Bedeya

and Santhals, etc., still believe that Jaipal Singh was their leader and his Adibasi Sabha was the Sabha of the aboriginals, both Christian and non-Christian. In my opinion, to call the Mahasabha of the non-Christians now and to make the same a success is very difficult. Since Theble Babu had left the Adibasi Sabha of Jaipal Singh he is preaching among the non-Christians for the last 2 years but people in general do not rely upon him as he once advocated the cause of Jaipal Singh's Adibasi Sabha and so I have to face much difficulty. Most probably Rai Saheb Bandiram is not openly coming on our side as he is anticipating the same trouble and now he is secretly trying to make his lieutenant understand that there was danger in the Adibasi [Sabha] of Jaipal Singh as the Christians really were benefited by that [sic]. I think I have written sufficient to acquaint you with the real situation and in my opinion before calling the Mahasabha of Chhotanagpur first there should be organised *Thana* Sabha or some such Sabha in the interior in all the districts and then to call the Mahasabha testing the result. So now to call the Mahasabha is not desirable. The Christians are organised through the Missions and their teachers who mostly get pay from the District Board fund are preachers also. (Block grant is granted by the District Board to the Missions and the non-Christians are not benefited therefrom as the non-Christians do not want to send their boys to Mission schools. The Chairman of the District Board wants to divide the block grant between them in proportion to their number and so the Christian members of the District Board wanted to pass a vote of no-confidence and they would have succeeded had there been no Congress Party in the District Board and I am afraid that they will make another attempt as the Congress has ordered their parties to remove. I am enclosing a copy of the Report of the Chairman of District Board for your perusal and information. Besides, there are Christian Sub-Inspectors, Assistant Inspectors, Constables, Doctors of District Board and Peshkars and others who all are organised and follow the mandate of the Missions whose sole aim is to take away the non-Christian aborigines from the Hindu fold. Thus you will see the difficulty.

The other difficulty is that the landlords of this part are indifferent though they are the worst sufferers. Had they taken interest in these matters it would not have been so difficult as we are feeling now. Now they also are realising it and I hope after we move sufficiently amongst them and also amongst the other men of influence in the interior and acquaint them with the real fact and the motive of the missionaries and their flocks we will be able to do something. Rajendra Babu is very right in saying that we should hold such conference only when we will be sure of its success. I have been doing the propaganda work and have been able to make the majority of the non-Christians understand the real motive of the Adibasi Sabha of Jaipal Singh who pleads even for the adoption of Bengali script in Chhotanagpur, but I have not yet been able to bring them fully on my side. Our cause is just and the other side is misleading them, so I think that we shall succeed in the long run but we will have to wait for some time and go on doing the propaganda work honestly and then to call the Mahasabha.

I have not met Babu K.C. Basu of Nibaran Ashram nor Narainji of Seva

Kendra, Gumla, nor Ramrakshaji of Tiril, so I cannot say about their views. Amongst these three only Babu K.C. Basu knows fully well all about these matters; and Ramrakshaji and Narainji are new men and are busy with their own work. So they, in my opinion, also will be of not much help as Rajendra Babu also thinks. Further, to work for these matters among the non-Christian aboriginals is very difficult as they cannot believe the foreign people unless one has mixed with them for sufficiently long time but I would suggest that all the workers be advised to keep this idea of holding the Mahasabha in view and from now begin to do the propaganda work for it in addition to their own work so far as possible and they should try in their fields to impress upon the landlords of the locality the necessity of their taking interest in these matters and then we may successfully hold the Mahasabha sometime after. I request that I may be informed of the opinion of other gentlemen also on the subject. Regarding the Presidentship I agree with Rajendra Babu.

Thakkar Bapa knows well all these and I shall be glad if you place all these facts before him.

Yours sincerely,
Raj Kumarlal

Sri Shyamlalji
Assistant Secretary
Harijan Sevak Sangh
Kingsway, Delhi.

Copy to Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Sadaquat Ashram, Patna.

Enclosure not included.

23. *From A. V. Thakkar to K. C. Basu*

HARIJAN SEVAK SANGH

Camp: Devacottai
Ramnad District, South India
September 13, 1941

My dear Kshitish,

I am sorry to find from your letter dated Ranchi the 2nd instant that you do not agree with the idea of holding a Conference of the Adivasis in Ranchi district in 1941. Circumstances change every few months and therefore there is no reason to believe that what was once a failure will ever be a failure.

As regards Presidentship, any suggestion will be welcome. I quite agree that the name of Rajendra Babu will give a political colour. If either Sachchidanand or J. K. Birla can be secured, I will prefer it. I think that sufficient time has passed by to make our influence felt by the constructive work we have already done.

Please reply, if you reconsider your opinion, in C/o Sjt. V.R. Nayanar, Servants of India Society, Calicut (Br. Malabar).

Yours sincerely,
A.V. Thakkar
General Secretary

Sjt. K.C. Basu
Nibaran Ashram
Hinoo
P.O. Ranchi.

Copies forwarded to:

1. Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Bajajwadi, Wardha.
2. Shri Narayanji, Seva Kendra, Gumla, Ranchi District.
3. Br. Ramraksha Upadhyay, Tiril Village, Near Ranchi.

24. From Parashuram Sharma to Abul Kalam Azad

SHRI SANATAN DHARAM PRATINIDHI SABHA, PUNJAB

No. 8649

Lahore
December 13, 1941

Respected Maulana Sahib,

This Sabha is very much grateful to yourself and the Congress members of the Punjab Assembly to attend the session on the 11th instant when the Hindu Charitable and Religious Endowments Bill came up before the Assembly. The mover, however, on account of peculiar circumstances on the occasion was forced to get it postponed to the next session of the Assembly. I am confident that the said Sub-Committee will kindly allow the members to attend the Assembly at that time and to take part in the discussions. At this time the notice to the members to attend was very short. Hence the attendance could not be expected to be as full as possible. My request is that sufficient time be kindly given so that the members could attend conveniently. The Sabha will let you know beforehand of the date when the said Bill comes up in the next session.

Once again I express my gratitude to you and other members of the Congress Parliamentary Sub-Committee.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,
Parashuram Sharma
Secretary
Mandir Sudhar Sub-Committee

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad
President, Indian National Congress
Swaraj Bhawan
Allahabad.

Copy forwarded to Dr Rajendra Prasad, Wardha, for information.

25. From Mahatma Gandhi to Abul Kalam Azad

Bardoli
30 December 1941

Dear Maulana Sahib,

In the course of discussion in the Working Committee, I discovered that I had committed a grave error in the interpretation of the Bombay resolution. I had interpreted it to mean that the Congress was to refuse participation in the present or all war on the ground principally of non-violence. I found to my astonishment that most members differed from my interpretation and held that the opposition need not be on the ground of non-violence. On re-reading the Bombay resolution I found that the differing members were right and that I had read into it a meaning which its letter could not bear. The discovery of the error makes it impossible for me to lead the Congress in the struggle for resistance to war effort on grounds in which non-violence was not indispensable. I could not, for instance, identify myself with opposition to war effort on the ground of illwill against Great Britain. The resolution contemplated material association with Britain in the war effort as a price for guaranteed independence of India. If such was my view and I believed in the use of violence for gaining independence and yet refused participation in the effort as the price of that independence I would consider myself guilty of unpatriotic conduct. It is my certain belief that only non-violence can save India and the world from self-extinction. Such being the case, I must continue my mission whether I am alone or assisted by an organisation or individuals. You will, therefore, please relieve me of the

responsibility laid upon me by the Bombay resolution. I must continue civil disobedience for free speech against all war with such Congressmen and others whom I select and who believe in the non-violence I have contemplated and are willing to conform to prescribed conditions.

I will not, at this critical period, select for civil disobedience those whose services are required to steady and help the people in their respective localities.

Yours sincerely,
M.K. Gandhi

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Sahib
President
Indian National Congress.

26. From Parashuram Sharma to Abul Kalam Azad

SANATAN DHARAM PRATINIDHI SABHA, PUNJAB

No. 9055.

Lahore
January 1, 1942

Respected Maulana Sahib,

In continuation of this office letter No. 8649 of 13th December last I beg to say that the Hindu Charitable and Religious Endowment Bill is expected to come before the Assembly by the end of this month or in the beginning of February next.

You and the Congress Parliamentary Sub-Committee was good enough to allow the Congress members to attend the session of the Assembly on the 11th December 1941 when the said Bill came up for discussion. But the time for the Congress members to attend was very short. They could not come in full force to meet the opposing party who were in larger numbers and for this reason the mover had to get it postponed.

Now when the Bill is expected to come up in this month I shall feel highly obliged if you and the Sub-Committee [be] good enough to give permission beforehand to the Congress members to attend the Assembly on the day when the said Bill comes up for discussion. This will avoid the adverse situation which appeared last time. I am confident that you will kindly issue instructions to the Leader of the Congress Party just now so that we could request them to attend

the particular session in time.

Thanking you in anticipation,

Yours very sincerely,
Parashuram Sharma
Secretary
Mandir Sudhar Sub-Committee

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Sahib
President, Indian National Congress
Bardoli.

Copy to Babu Rajendra Prasad.

*27. From the General Secretary, A.I.C.C., to all Provincial and District
Congress Committees*

ALL INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE

Swaraj Bhawan
Allahabad
January 21, 1942

Dear Friend,

Now that the Bardoli resolution has been accepted by the A.I.C.C., all controversies created in its wake must cease. Congressmen and Congress Committees must forget the remote contingency of an understanding with the authorities, in which the mover of the resolution did not himself believe. They must direct their energies to the task before the country in the present emergency when the war has approached the borders of India. In this connection the Working Committee at Bardoli issued certain instructions for the guidance of Congressmen and Congress Committees which have since been embodied in a resolution of the A.I.C.C. A copy of these instructions was forwarded to you from our camp office at Bardoli. Copy of the resolution based upon the Bardoli instructions* is sent herewith for your information and necessary action thereon.

The resolution rightly points out that the Congress can help and serve the people "only if its organisation is strong and disciplined". For then alone can Congressmen command the confidence of the people. We must, therefore, address ourselves immediately "to the task of strengthening the organisation and reviving and maintaining contact with the people in the villages and towns". To this end it is essential that every village "should receive the message of the Congress".

But this alone is not enough. The Congress message must be accompanied by concrete day-to-day activity. The present resolution states that the "constructive programme adopted by the Congress and explained from time to time by Gandhiji is of particular importance at this juncture". Worked in the spirit of its author, it means no harm whatsoever to any legitimate party or interest. In the words of the present resolution, "it is meant not only to bring about unity among various groups, to remove disabilities which keep sections of the community backward and depressed, to promote self-reliance and the cooperative spirit among the people, to increase production and have fairer distribution, but it also furnishes the best opportunity and means of contact with the people and service to them which are necessary for winning their confidence". In fact the constructive programme represents duties neglected heretofore, the non-performance of which has principally resulted in our present state of helplessness and slavery. In the circumstances existing today, on account of war, when prices of commodities have already risen and are rising and causing distress and no adequate steps have been so far taken by the authorities to meet the situation, "the constructive programme presents unique opportunities not only to steady the people but to serve and organise them". The high prices and scarcity due to dislocation of trade and transport are more likely to increase than diminish in the near future, due to the increasing stress of war. At such a time it is not big industry, the target of the war machine, but small decentralised industry carried on in the villages, that is likely to help and serve us.

To secure effective and speedy working of the constructive programme, the following directions may be noted and carried out as far as possible.

- (1) The P.C.C.s should get from all the districts lists of workers with their names and addresses and record of work. Such lists may also be sent to the A.I.C.C. office.
- (2) Chief provincial workers should visit various districts and call meetings of workers and explain to them the steps that have to be taken for carrying out the various items of the programme. The names of such workers as consent to participate in any item or items of the programme must be recorded and suitable work organised for them.
- (3) A Provincial Member-in-charge or a Sub-Committee for constructive work be appointed. The person in charge or in the case of the Committee its members must have full faith in the economic and political efficacy of the programme to be worked out. There may be similar Members-in-charge or Committees in the districts. Such Members-in-charge or Committees will keep themselves in constant touch with workers in the district, understand and meet their difficulties, raise funds and do such other work as may be necessary for the efficient working of the programme.
- (4) Training centres may be opened, if possible, in every district where workers will receive necessary training in the different departments of work undertaken. The P.C.C.s must also try to have the services of agricultural

experts, who would advise village cultivators about the best food crops that can be grown and their substitutes in the present emergency.

- (5) Days may be observed throughout the Province to popularise different items of the constructive programme. For instance, there may be a Khadi day, a Hindu-Muslim Unity day, a Harijan day, a Rural Uplift day and the like. These days should not be merely for show. They should serve to focus people's attention on the various aspects of our nation-building activity.

During these times of stress and strain, owing to the great poverty, unemployment and scarcity prevalent in the land, there are possibilities of food riots and consequent looting of grain shops etc. We have reports of such looting and rioting from several places. Advantage may also be taken by anti-social forces of the prevalent uncertainty and scarcity to create internal confusion. If the constructive programme is worked in the proper spirit the possibilities of looting and rioting will be minimised. To that extent the anti-social forces can also be kept in check. But this may not be enough. Therefore, wherever possible, volunteer corps may be formed. They must be principally in rural areas, for self-reliance, mutual cooperation and to face any emergency that may arise. Though a uniform and some sort of drill increase the efficiency of a volunteer corps, yet, in the present circumstances, wherever there is any possibility of conflict with authorities or with rival organisations, such aids may be dispensed with. The external help derived from uniform, drill, etc., can be more than compensated by the patriotic zeal and enthusiasm of the organisation and its members. Wherever possible the Congress volunteers should cooperate with like organisations of other parties with similar aims. It is needless to remind you that non-violence must be the basic principle of our volunteer organisation.

In short "To the villages" must be the slogan of Congressmen. Every member of a Congress executive or of an elective Committee, if not every primary member, should make himself responsible for some one or more items of constructive programme. He must keep a careful day-to-day diary of his work. Such diaries must be inspected by the authorities from time to time and suggestions made and instructions issued in the light of what is recorded.

The A.I.C.C. office must be kept fully informed of the organisation introduced and the progress of the work undertaken. The head office will always be happy and ready to cooperate in the effort.

Please acknowledge.

Yours sincerely,
J.B. Kripalani
General Secretary

*See Appendix.

28. *From Krishna Ballabh Sahai to the General Secretary, Bihar Provincial Congress Committee*

Hazaribagh
February 21, 1942

Dear Sir,

I would like to bring to your notice, in the hope of getting guidance from you, the following difficulties which I have experienced in the matter of volunteer organisations to which I have been giving my particular attention:

(1) It is easy to organise village defence force (Gram Raksha Samity) at places where no organisation of the Muslim League or Hindu Sabha exists. But where these two organisations and specially the former are functioning it is not so easy to do so. The Musalmans generally don't like to work under the Congress organisation. To leave them is, for all intents and purposes, to create practically a Hindu organisation which may come into conflict with the volunteer force which the Muslim League has built up or will probably build up as a retort to our efforts. It is however easy to create a village defence force working *not under the Congress* but consisting of volunteers from all communities. But the Muslim volunteers joining such a force not only refuse to be ordinary members of the Congress, they will not even wear Gandhi-cap or *chapras* made of Khadi.

(2) Often the volunteers we enrol suggest that for night patrol they should carry with them *garas* or *phrasas* or even guns. These are required not only for attacking thieves and dacoits but to protect themselves from wild beasts which appear at night. I have been telling them that they should not carry these weapons because it may lead to their being incriminated by the Police. But supposing the British Government collapses and the thugs and dacoits we are preparing against actually make their appearance, are these volunteers expected to meet them with non-violence? In my opinion this is too much to expect from newly enrolled volunteers who are not even 4-anna Congress members and who are not habitual Khadi wearers. To confine volunteer organisations to only staunch Congressmen is to make the attempt of village defence ludicrous.

I think these and other kindred points deserve thorough discussion. Anyway, clear instructions on these points will be highly appreciated. I am forwarding copy of this letter to Dr. Rajendra Prasad and Mr. Kripalani, General Secretary, A.I.C.C.

Yours sincerely,
K.B. Sahai

The General Secretary
Provincial Congress Committee
Sadaquat Ashram, Patna.

Copy to Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Bajajwadi, Wardha.

29. From the General Secretary, A.I.C.C., to all Provincial Congress Committees

ALL INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE

Swaraj Bhawan
Allahabad
February 23, 1942

Dear Friend,

Inter-Provincial consultation and coordination are necessary and helpful in normal times. They are more so during these anxious times. Various problems face us today. Each P.C.C. has got a plan of its own to meet the common problems and problems peculiar to itself. Under these circumstances it would be of advantage if select active workers from Provinces could meet together, compare notes and benefit by mutual experience. This will not only give them valuable information but enable them where possible to pool their resources.

Periodical meetings of representatives of all Provinces, some of them very far-flung, in one place, though desirable, would not be possible, especially in these days of travel difficulties. The expenses involved would also be considerable. It is therefore suggested that the following regions of contiguous Provinces may be formed for inter-Provincial consultation and collaboration.

- (1) Assam, Bengal, Utkal
- (2) Bihar, United Provinces, Mahakoshal, Ajmere-Merwara
- (3) Punjab, Sind, Frontier, Delhi
- (4) Gujarat, Bombay, Maharashtra, Karnatak, C.P. (Marathi), Vidarbha
- (5) Tamil Nadu, Andhra, Kerala.

It would be desirable to hold one meeting a month of each of these regions. If that is not possible, at least one meeting in two months should be held. Each Province may send anywhere from one to three representatives to the meeting of its region. I may add that the purpose of these regional meetings can be served only if the representatives selected are the Provincial Presidents, Secretaries or active field workers who have a personal knowledge of the difficulties, resources and methods of work in their respective Provinces.

I should like you, in collaboration with the Provinces in your region, to arrange the first regional meeting as soon as possible. I or some other representative of the A.I.C.C. would like to be present to facilitate work. I would therefore request you to inform me as soon as possible of the dates during which it may be possible for you to settle in consultation with each other a meeting of your region.

I suggest that the following Provinces in each of the five regions may take initiative and set the machinery of consultation in motion to the end that the first meetings may be called as soon as possible. Subsequent meetings need not be

held in the same Province in the region. The meeting place may be changed from time to time.

- Region 1. Bengal
- Region 2. United Provinces
- Region 3. Punjab
- Region 4. Bombay
- Region 5. Tamil Nadu

If any of the Provinces suggested here for taking the initiative in the matter is for any reasons not in a position to do so this office may immediately be informed so that arrangements may be made with some other Provinces in the region, to do the needful.

After these first meetings have been held, it will be possible for us to work out coordination among the regions themselves.

Yours sincerely,
J.B. Kripalani
General Secretary

30. *From L.S. Amery to Sir Stafford Cripps*

9th March 1942

My dear Cripps,

I enclose a simplified version of the plan, leaving out the detailed composition of the constituent body with the consequential details about local option which have created so much anxiety, which I drafted on Saturday, in case it was still thought desirable to proceed by way of immediate public declaration. It has now become superfluous and I am not circulating it. But I send it along to you as I think there is something to be said both for the new opening sentence, and for the slightly revised lay-out. You may care to have it with you when you come to drafting the final outcome of your talks in declaration form. There are also some quite good points in Linlithgow's long alternative, more particularly the point that the treaty negotiations would be conducted concurrently with the constitution-making, no doubt by a delegation from the Convention.

We must have a really good talk before you leave. Would you and Lady Cripps dine quietly with us on Tuesday or Wednesday at 7.45? Do you include fish and eggs in your diet (when procurable) or are you a vegetarian of the straiter sect?

Anyhow all possible good luck to you on your venture. The one mathematical problem we did not touch upon at lunch yesterday was squaring the circle—that has been left to you to accomplish by negotiation.

Yours ever,
L.S. Amery

Enclosure not included

31. *From V. Raghaviah to Mahatma Gandhi*

Nellore
March 15, 1942

Dear Bapuji,

The following cuttings indicate the extent of mischief done by the power politics of Congressmen, thanks to their fateful entry into councils and local bodies. Cannot you, at least now, purge the Congress institutions from this cancer? Perhaps the evil is too strong even for you

As regards the no-confidence against Sri Prakasam I do not wonder about its being carried out in a body (Andhra Provincial Congress) which has witnessed the defeat of Desabhaktha Venkatappaiah and Sitaram Sastri in contest for seats to that body.

Andhras have a great knack in grave-digging and all of us are silent and impotent spectators of this disease.

V. Raghaviah
Member, A.I.C.C.

Mahatma Gandhi
Sevagram, Wardha.

Copy to Sri Rajendra Prasad.

Enclosures not included.

32. *From Master Tara Singh to Abul Kalam Azad*

Amritsar
March 15, 1942

Sir,

It is now certain that Sir Stafford Cripps is coming to make an effort to settle the problem of Indian Swaraj. This appears to be a genuine effort and may prove to be a final one. It is also clear that Sir Stafford Cripps will try to settle the communal problem in India. So I wish to remind you that the Congress gave a promise to the Sikhs in 1929 by a resolution passed in the Annual Session held at Lahore that the Congress would be no party to any communal settlement which would not satisfy the minorities including the Sikhs. I, therefore, suggest that in order to avoid any misunderstanding and to remove misapprehensions, some

Sikhs representing the Sikh community may be consulted at every stage of the communal settlement.

I am,
Your most obedient servant,
Tara Singh
President, Shiromani Akali Dal &
Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad
President, All India Congress Committee
Calcutta.

Copy to:

Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru
Mahatma Gandhi
Mr. Rajagopalachariar
Babu Rajendra Prasad
Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

33. *From the General Secretary, A.I.C.C., to all Provincial Congress Committees*

ALL INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE

Swaraj Bhawan
Allahabad
March 24, 1942

Dear Friend,

The Working Committee which met in Wardha on March 17 considered the reports of the working of the constructive programme received from Provinces. The reports revealed that while the work was making steady progress in some Provinces, no serious beginnings were yet made in others: Constructive programme being the only programme before Congressmen today, the strength and efficiency of our organisation will be judged by the extent to which Congress Committees are able to mobilise their resources for carrying it out. A heavy responsibility rests on the shoulders of those who are guiding and controlling affairs in the Provinces. Things happen or are made to happen in the country which tend to distract our attention from our task but we must be on our guard.

The programme placed by the A.I.C.C. before the country, is twofold: (i) self-protection, and (ii) self-sufficiency. Fairly detailed instructions with regard to

both have been issued by this office. It is now up to you to act and supplement and amplify them to meet the local requirements. What is needed is not more instructions but further and more intensive effort.

Self-protection has a double aspect: (i) protection from air-raids, and (ii) protection from internal disorder. Government and semi-Government agencies are at work for organising protection against possible air-raids. It is common knowledge that in spite of considerable expenditure, Government efforts lack popular appeal and support. The results achieved therefore bear little relation to the effort and money spent. For this and other reasons Congressmen cannot associate themselves with Government controlled bodies. But it would be folly to impede their effort unless what they do is against the A.I.C.C. instructions. The instructions that the official A.R.P. organisations broadcast to the people should be studied and such of them as are sound and reasonable should be commended to the people for adoption. These instructions may be adhered to by the local Congress Committees according to the needs of the local situation.

The Congress has for the last two months been carrying on propaganda against fear and panic with considerable effort. Naturally the panic is greatest in areas which are in danger[from] sea and air. The situation in these areas has to be closely and constantly studied by local Congressmen and advice given to people. The problem of evacuation must be carefully considered. As pointed [out] by Gandhiji the military authorities would not like at critical times to be encumbered with the problems of such of the civil population as is not needed in a particular locality. Therefore those whose everyday-business does not require them to be in cities that are liable to attack from air and sea and those who are afraid, should leave such localities without creating confusion and panic. Before they leave they must make sure that they will not create problems for themselves and for those with whom they take refuge. There is time enough for regulated evacuation. Afterwards when actual bombing takes place, if the timid and those not wanted begin evacuation in a hurry, they will create problems as in other countries with which we are familiar through the papers.

As to protection from internal civil disorder, we have already issued necessary instructions. The volunteer organisation that we contemplate for meeting the needs of the present situation is broad-based. Our previous volunteer organisations were subject to many rules and a fairly severe disciplinary code and were confined to Congressmen. This time we have thrown open the doors of the organisation to all our countrymen irrespective of political affiliations, the only condition being adherence to peaceful methods. Maintenance of peace and security is the chief aim of the volunteer organisation. It should not therefore be difficult to realise that this can be achieved only through peaceful means. No countryman of ours can have any reasonable objection to subscribing to this perfectly obvious and necessary condition. We are happy to note that the response to Congress call in this direction has been ample and spontaneous. The drive therefore to enlist members of all communities and all political parties for

the volunteer organisation should be further intensified. The organisation should be split up into units of ten or twenty, each in charge of a mohalla in the city or of a village or part thereof in rural areas. The units should mainly confine themselves to the service and protection of their respective localities. They should be in constant touch with the people. They should try to serve them in every way. They should help in organising mohalla meetings and otherwise carrying on the constructive programme. Their chief duty, of course, will be the maintenance of peace in the mohalla, prevention of disorder, and, in the event of any disorder breaking out, protecting the people. Volunteers should be animated by community of feeling and unity of purpose. At night they should learn to watch and guard their respective localities. All this will give our people a sense of security, a common purpose and common action. It will give us and the people necessary training for cooperation and self-help.

The programme of self-sufficiency has been explained time and again by Gandhiji. Each passing day emphasises the urgency of carrying out this programme with speed and thoroughness. Conditions approaching starvation and nakedness exist already in large parts of the country. Semi-nakedness, semi-starvation and unemployment have been the lot of many for a long time past. But with the war lengthening out, many more have been thrown out of work and the earnings of many others have considerably diminished. Conditions will go on progressively deteriorating. The new taxation imposed by the Central and Provincial Governments have added to the already great misery of the masses and hit hard the lower middle classes. Therefore if the situation is not controlled it will lead to all manner of highly undesirable consequences. It can be controlled only by the programmes of 'self-sufficiency'. Many items in the programme require technical ability. Happily we have organisations carrying on this work for the past many years. They are technically equipped for the tasks they have undertaken. The All India Spinners' Association and the All India Village Industries Association may be drawn upon for whatever technical advice and assistance is needed. Their cooperation and supervision should be sought. This will impose new duties and new tasks upon these organisations. The existing staff may not be able to cope with these. But if Congress Committees take up the self-sufficiency programme in earnest, we have no doubt the A.I.S.A. and A.I.V.I.A. would willingly do their part. We have had complaints from Congressmen and Congress Committees that the A.I.S.A. is half-hearted in its response to their needs. Many of these complaints are based on ignorance. The A.I.S.A. and A.I.V.I.A. branches are subject to definite rules and work under serious financial and other limitations. They cannot be as swift in their response to our demands as Congressmen would wish them to be. While we are putting ourselves in touch with A.I.S.A. and A.I.V.I.A. headquarters, you will please get into touch with the Provincial branches and devise a technique of mutual cooperation. I hope you have carried out the suggestion I made in one of my previous circulars that Provincial Secretaries of the A.I.S.A., A.I.V.I.A., Harijan Sevak Sangh, Hindustani Talimi Sangh, and the Women's Department should be associated

with your Provincial Executive. This should greatly facilitate mutual cooperation.

There is a great paucity of trained workers in khadi village industry and village work. The best thing under the circumstances for you will be to send some intelligent young men to Wardha to join the institutions started by the A.I.V.I.A. and the A.I.S.A. for training workers. The expenses at Wardha for a student do not exceed Rs. 15 per month, all told. The A.I.V.I.A. Secretary, Sri Kumarappa, has assured us that he will be willing to accept responsibility for the training of all those who are sent to the central institution of the association at Wardha. I have no doubt that the A.I.S.A. Secretary will allow similar facilities. The expenses of course will have to be met by the P.C.C. sending out workers for training. For particulars of the training you will please correspond with the Secretaries of the two Associations at Wardha. Whenever there are Provincial centres for training I am sure those in charge of them will welcome workers selected by the P.C.C. for receiving training.

Please note the following directions for your office:

- (1) Send us a detailed report of the work done in your Province every month, if not every fortnight.
- (2) Send a report of your work to all Provinces. Other Provinces will send you theirs. This exchange of reports will keep the Provinces in touch with one another and give you valuable suggestions.
- (3) Send us copies of the circulars that you issue from time to time. If the circulars are written in languages other than Hindustani or English please send us their Hindustani or English renderings.
- (4) You should appoint inspectors who will go round, see the work and submit reports.
- (5) Send copies of our circulars, unless they concern you exclusively, to District Congress Committees in your Province. We have complaints from some districts that they are in ignorance of the instructions that we send to the Provinces.

Please acknowledge receipt.

Yours sincerely,
J.B. Kripalani
General Secretary
All India Congress Committee

34. *From D.N. Gupta to J.B. Kripalani*

OFFICE OF THE NAGPUR NAGAR CONGRESS COMMITTEE

New Itwari Road
Nagpur
April 21, 1942

My dear Kripalaniji,

The question whether Congressmen should cooperate or not with Government A.R.P. measures has been engaging the attention of my Committee for some time. The C.P. Governor addressed a Press conference the other day in which he appealed to the Press and people of all shades of opinion to cooperate with this work of common welfare. Referring to the non-official volunteer organisations working for civil defence (of which Congress is the most important), he said, "It will be possible to get the maximum value out of the members of those organisations if they fall in some way in line with the official scheme." While therefore there is no objection to such organisations retaining their party labels, if they so desire, I strongly urge such organisations might cooperate with the Government A.R.P. if the man at the head of the organisation is a non-official public man who can command the confidence of the public. Another suggestion made to me is that we must press for the appointment of a Central A.R.P. Committee of which a distinguished non-official shall be the president, and majority of the members shall be representatives of the Congress, Hindu Sabha, Muslim League, etc. Please let us know what you think of these suggestions. I am told coordination between Government and Congress organisations has been established in Calcutta and Lucknow. If so, on what lines has it been done? Your instructions in this regard will clear much of the confusion that prevails here today.

The question is, can the Congress Surakshan Dal organisation cooperate with Government A.R.P. organisations, and, if so, on what terms? This question will have to be decided by us very soon and therefore I shall be very grateful if you kindly let me have your guidance at your earliest.

With regards,

I am,
Yours truly,
D.N. Gupta
President

Nagpur Nagar Congress Committee

Acharya J.B. Kripalani
General Secretary
All India Congress Committee.

35. *From the Office Secretary, All India Congress Committee, to D.N. Gupta, President, Nagpur Nagar Congress Committee*

ALL INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE

Swaraj Bhawan
Allahabad
April 25, 1942

Dear Friend,

We have your letter of the 21st instant. As regards A.R.P. activities Congressmen should not participate in any meeting or other functions organised directly by the A.R.P. authorities. They should adopt the following course:

- (1) Representative Congressmen should have no objection to discussing with representatives of the A.R.P. as to what steps the latter is taking and where necessary to point out that certain steps are not desirable.
- (2) In regard to certain obvious precautions which the A.R.P. is urging, Congressmen should help through their own organisation in giving publicity to these precautions.
- (3) The general attitude of Congressmen should be of not obstructing A.R.P. work in any way and in helping through their own organisation in popularising such items as seem to them necessary and in helping in any way to maintain public morale and prevent panic.
- (4) In the event of any non-official Citizens' Committee being formed in any city, as is being done in Bombay and in other places, some Congressmen may associate themselves in this Committee which may also have non-official representatives of the A.R.P. Such a Committee should serve as a coordinating agency to keep in touch with various groups and avoid waste and overlapping. In effect the Committee would advise and would not be able to do any direct work unless it is organised by the municipal authorities. The chief advantage of such a committee might serve a useful purpose in creating a better atmosphere in the city.
- (5) All this should not be allowed to come in the way of the direct work the Congress is doing in regard to the programme of self-sufficiency and self-protection and organisation on their behalf. This work should be carried out on non-partisan lines and cooperation of every group invited.

The chief difficulty about the present A.R.P. work is not only that it is official but largely run on ignorant and incompetent lines. Officials neither know nor care how to get public cooperation and their work is tied up with red tape. We cannot therefore associate ourselves with it formally but we owe a duty to the public and we must tell them what they should do in cases of emergency. In this

matter there can be cooperation to some extent in what we say and what the A.R.P. says. For instance take cover if there is an air-raid.

Yours sincerely,
(Sd.)
Office Secretary

Shri D.N. Gupta
President
Nagar Congress Committee
Nagpur.

36. *From Lord Linlithgow to L.S. Amery*

New Delhi
30 April 1942

FOLLOWING IS SUMMARY OF PRESS ACCOUNT OF PROCEEDINGS ON OPENING DAY OF ALL INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE SESSION AT ALLAHABAD ON (APRIL 29TH) ONLY ABOUT 100 MEMBERS OUT OF ABOUT 370 ARE REPORTED TO HAVE ATTENDED

1 THIS DATE WAS CORRECT

2 REUTER HAS ALREADY TELEGRAPHED POINTS FROM MAULANA AZADS PRESIDENTIAL SPEECH FOLLOWING ARE FURTHER POINTS FROM SPEECH BEGINS CRIPPS IN HIS TALKS WITH AZAD HAD DEFINITELY SAID THAT FORM OF PRESENT GOVERNMENT WOULD BE THAT OF NATIONAL GOVERNMENT AND POSITION OF VICEROY VIS-A-VIS NATIONAL GOVERNMENT WOULD BE THAT OF KING IN RELATION TO CABINET AZAD HAD POINTED OUT THAT MAIN PURPOSE OF MISSION SHOULD BE SETTLEMENT OF POLITICAL ISSUE ONLY AND THAT OTHER ISSUES LIKE COMMUNAL (QUESTION) AND THAT OF STATES WOULD NOT BE RELEVANT AT THAT STAGE AND WERE IN ANY CASE TO BE SETTLED BY INDIANS THEMSELVES CRIPPS AGREED AND SAID THAT HE HIMSELF HAD TAKEN THIS LINE BEFORE THE WAR CABINET BUT THIS PICTURE GRADUALLY DISAPPEARED AND CRIPPS FINALLY GAVE IT SUCH DIFFERENT SHAPE THAT IT COULD NOT POSSIBLY APPEAL TO INDIA CRIPPS HAD MADE IT PLAIN THAT INDIA OFFICE AS SUCH WOULD NOT CONTINUE BUT LATER THIS POINT ALSO DISAPPEARED DECISIONS OF WORKING COMMITTEE WERE UNANIMOUS WHOLE-HEARTED SUPPORTERS OF GANDHI ON NON-VIOLENCE WERE WONDERFULLY (CONCILIATORY) CRIPPS HAD EMPHASISED THAT INITIATIVE IN DEALING WITH INDIAN SITUATION WOULD NOT COME FROM BRITISH GOVERNMENT BUT HE (AZAD) MADE IT CLEAR NO FURTHER STEP WOULD BE TAKEN BY CONGRESS EITHER OUR DIFFERENCES WITH BRITAIN SHOULD NOT DRIVE US TO WELCOMING JAPANESE OR ANY OTHER AGGRESSOR EITHER BY "ACTIVE WELCOME" OR BY "SILENT WELCOME" I WARN YOU SPECIALLY AGAINST "SILENT WELCOME" WE WILL USE WEAPON OF NON-VIOLENCE IF FACED WITH ANY AGGRESSOR WE WOULD HAVE PUT UP ARMED DEFENCE (BUT THAT) HAS BEEN DENIED US WEAPON OF NON-VIOLENCE HAS BEEN WITH US FOR LAST 22 YEARS AND NO ONE CAN TAKE IT AWAY ENDS ASAF ALI SECONDING

RESOLUTION MOVED BY RAJENDRA PRASAD WHICH ENDORSED AND APPROVED RESOLUTION OF WORKING COMMITTEE ABOUT CRIPPS PROPOSALS DECRIED INTERVIEW WITH CRIPPS AND SAID PROPOSALS WERE NOT SINCERE BUT MERELY INTENDED TO PUTTING OF FACADE BEFORE WORLD CRIPPS EXPLANATION OF BREAKDOWN IS INTENDED AS POLITICAL PROPAGANDA AMONG UNITED NATIONS IF THESE NATIONS WERE TAKEN IN BY CRIPPS PROPAGANDA IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT FOR CONGRESS TO CONTINUE THEIR ATTITUDE OF SYMPATHY WITH CAUSE OF UNITED NATIONS RESOLUTION WAS THEN PASSED ONE MEMBER DISSENTING

3. NEHRU THEN MOVED WORKING COMMITTEE RESOLUTION'S PUBLICATION OF WHICH HAS BEEN BANNED AND TEXT OF WHICH IS BEING SENT BY HOME DEPARTMENT BHULABHAI DESAI SECONDED RESOLUTIONS WHICH WERE UNANIMOUSLY PASSED

LINLITHGOW

37. *From Sir M. Hallett to Lord Linlithgow*

10 May 1942

My dear Lord Linlithgow,

We are getting a certain amount of interesting information about the A.I.C.C. meeting at Allahabad, and though no doubt this will reach Your Excellency through the D.I.B., I think it desirable to bring it personally to your notice.

We have recently intercepted the original draft of the "war" resolution with certain manuscript corrections and I enclose a photograph of this document and also a broadsheet showing in parallel columns the original draft, the corrected draft, and the final draft which was passed by the A.I.C.C. and published.

2. The draft was enclosed in a letter from Sadik Ali, a Secretary of the A.I.C.C., to Rajendra Prasad who, as the letter shows, had asked for it. It is very curious that this letter should have gone through the post, for Congress know well our power of interception and usually send important documents by special messenger. It is suggested to me that Sadik Ali is a friend of Sajjad Zaheer and Dr. Ashraf, two communist leaders in Congress, who, as the D.I.B.'s report of the 2nd May¹ shows, opposed the resolution; that it was sent by ordinary post so that it might be intercepted and so that Government might realise the pro-Japanese policy of Congress or of some members thereof, a policy strongly resented by the communist members. This may sound a little far-fetched but it is by no means impossible.

3. It is not of course possible to say with any certainty who was responsible for this draft. We know that Gandhi had written a letter of instructions as to the way he wished things to go (vide D.I.B. report of May 2nd) and I believe that Gandhi also sent a draft resolution from Wardha by a special messenger. If this draft is really the Mahatma's draft, then clearly he is a fifth columnist or a Quisling and we must be very watchful of his activities. I have no doubt Your Excellency will get the D.I.B. to go very carefully into this question of authorship.² Possibly they

may be able to identify the typewriter. The corrections may have been made by Acharya Narendra Deva.

4. There is no doubt that Nehru who, as Pilditch has rightly pointed out, “suffered from a confusion of impulses in which now the anti-British, now the anti-Japanese prevailed” opposed the resolution as originally drafted; he was at that time presumably under the influence of the anti-Japanese impulse and also as we know he is not really a disciple of non-violence and wanted guerilla warfare. Our information is that after long discussion Acharya Narendra Deva was asked to amend it to show non-violent non-cooperation with the invaders, and lip sympathy to the oppressed nations of Russia and China and it was to this draft, which was ultimately published, that Nehru agreed. We also have information to show that at a secret meeting reviewing the position of Congress, Acharya Kripalani stated that 75 per cent of Congress workers were pro-Japanese and 100 per cent anti-British. Rajendra Prasad expressed the view that it would be easier to oust the Japanese from India after ridding themselves of the British, whose imperialism was too deep-rooted.

5. All this information I had at the time when we first got hold of the draft, but I have just seen another intercepted letter from Rajendra Prasad from Wardha to Kripalani, dated 5th May, in which he says: “We saw Bapu yesterday and explained the whole position to him. He feels that though he does not like the resolution, it does not bar his way and we can proceed further. *He thinks there can be no other way than to go*; that the British should leave India alone. It is only *there* that we shall be able to live true life and make our own arrangements. The period of transition may be a difficult period and we must be prepared for it, but it need not necessarily be so.” The sentence italicized is not clear and the word “there” is presumably a mistake for “then”.

6. Knowing as we do that Rajendra Prasad wanted the original draft (but has not got it!), it seems to me that this latest letter justifies the inference that Gandhi was responsible for the original draft, though earlier in the letter I have held that it was doubtful. Much of the language is I think Gandhian, in particular the bit about non-violent non-cooperation which appeared in the final draft, and the bits about “scorched earth” policy and foreign soldiers. But apart from this it is clear as far as I can see that Gandhi and Rajendra hold the view that Britain must first go and that then they will be able to get rid of Japan. This comes out most clearly from Rajendra’s latest letter, also from the report of his views at the secret meeting to which I have referred. It is also clear from a study of the draft itself and in particular the deleted portions. Thus the following sentences have been deleted:

- (1) “Japan’s quarrel is not with India. She is warring against the British Empire.”
- (2) “If India were free, her first step would probably be to negotiate with Japan. The Congress is of opinion that if the British withdrew from India, India would be able to defend herself in the event of Japanese or any aggressor

attacking India.” (The amendment to this reads as follows: “If India were free, she would wish to keep out of the war, her sympathies with victims of aggression notwithstanding. India would also know how to defend herself in the event of Japanese or any aggressor attacking India.”)

- (3) “The A.I.C.C. is therefore of opinion that the British should withdraw from India.”
- (4) “The Committee desire to assure the Japanese Government and people that India bears no enmity either towards Japan or towards any other nation.” (The amendment runs— “India bears no enmity towards any foreign nation.”)
- (5) (This is not amended by the manuscript corrections.) “For all these reasons the Committee appeals to Britain, for the sake of her own safety, for the sake of Indian safety and for the cause of world peace to let go her hold on India, even if she does not give up all her Asiatic and African possessions.” In the published draft it is much milder: “Not only the interests of India but also Britain’s safety and world peace and freedom demand that Britain must abandon her hold on India.”

7. I have in a recent letter regarding non-official advisers given my reasons for holding that the political situation was deteriorating; perhaps it would be more correct to say that evidence was forthcoming to show that the Congress attitude was becoming more dangerous. If Gandhi and his followers who have the majority in Congress really hold that they should first by some measures not indicated get rid of us, it is certainly dangerous. One of the measures is obviously the campaign of vilification of the British armies and the British Government, of which the two banned resolutions were the most striking examples. We hear a good deal of fifth column activities in Burma (recently wounded officers and soldiers passing through Lucknow whom I have met have told me a good deal) and it looks to me as though we must be prepared for similar behaviour by the Hindu population in this country.

Yours sincerely,
M.G. Hallett

¹Not included.

²In a note dated 13 May Mr Pilditch commented as follows on paras 3-4 of Sir M. Hallett’s letter: “As regards the authorship of the original draft, there is not the least doubt that Gandhi was responsible. The original was toned down by Rajendra Prasad (not by Acharya Narendra Deva) for consideration by the Working Committee, and the final resolution as passed by the All India Congress Committee was the handiwork of Jawaharlal Nehru.”

A I C C WAR RESOLUTION, 1942

Remarks:

The italicised portions in column 1 indicate the words omitted in the corrected version in column 2.

The italicised portions in column 2 indicate the words inserted from ink corrections made on the original draft, shown in column 1.

Draft No. 1, dated Allahabad, April 27th 1942: Working Committee	Draft No. 1, dated Allahabad, April 27th, 1942: Working Committee, as finally corrected on the recovered copy	All India Congress Committee Resolution, May 1st, 1942*
(1)	(2)	(3)
Whereas the British War Cabinet's proposals sponsored by Sir Stafford Cripps have shown up British imperialism in its nakedness as never before, the A.I.C.C. has come to the following conclusions:	Whereas the British War Cabinet's proposals sponsored by Sir Stafford Cripps have shown up British imperialism in its nakedness as never before, the A.I.C.C. has come to the following conclusions:	In view of the imminent peril of invasion that confronts India, and the attitude of the British Government, as shown again in the recent proposals sponsored by Sir Stafford Cripps, the All-India Congress Committee has to declare afresh India's policy and to advise the people in regard to the action to be undertaken in the emergencies that may arise in the immediate future.
<i>The A.I.C.C. is of opinion that Britain is incapable of defending India.</i> It is natural that whatever she does is for her own defence. There is an eternal conflict between Indian and British interests. It follows that their notions of defence would also differ. The British	It is natural that whatever she does is for her own defence. There is an eternal conflict between Indian and British interests. It follows that their notions of defence would also differ. The British Government has no trust in India's political parties. The Indian Army has	The proposals of the British Government and their subsequent elucidation by Sir Stafford Cripps have

Government has no trust in India's political parties. The Indian Army has been maintained up till now mainly to hold India in subjugation. It has been completely segregated from the general population who can in no sense regard it as their own. This policy of distrust still continues and is the reason why national defence is not entrusted to India's elected representatives.

Japan's quarrel is not with India. She is warring against the British Empire. India's participation in the war has not been with the consent of the representatives of the Indian people. It was purely a British act. If India were freed *her first step would probably be to negotiate with Japan. The Congress is of opinion that if the British withdrew from India, India would be able to* defend herself in the event of Japanese or any aggressor attacking India.

The A.I.C.C. is therefore of opinion that the British should withdraw from India. The plea that they should remain in India for protecting the Indian Princes is wholly untenable. It is additional proof of their determination

been maintained up till now mainly to hold India in subjugation. It has been completely segregated from the general population who can in no sense regard it as their own. This policy of distrust still continues and is the reason why national defence is not entrusted to India's elected representatives, *and India rendered incapable of defending herself.*

India's participation in the war has not been with the consent of the representatives of the Indian people. It was purely a British act. If India were free she would wish to keep out of the war, her sympathies with victims of aggression notwithstanding. India would know also how to defend herself in the event of Japanese or any aggressor attacking India.

The plea that the *British* should remain in India for protecting the Indian Princes is wholly untenable. It is additional proof of their determination to maintain their hold over India. The Princes need have no fear from unarmed India

The question of majority and minority is a creation of the British

led to greater bitterness and distrust of that Government and the spirit of non-cooperation with Britain has grown. They have demonstrated that even in this hour of danger, not only to India but to the cause of the United Nations, the British Government functions as an imperialist government and refuses to recognise the independence of India or to part with any real power. India's participation in the war was a purely British act imposed upon the Indian people without the consent of their representatives. While India has no quarrel with the people of any country, she has repeatedly declared her antipathy to Nazism and Fascism as to imperialism. If India were free she would have determined her own policy and might have kept out of the war, though her sympathies would, in any event, have been with the victims of aggression. If, however, circumstances had led her to join the war, she would have done so as a free country fighting for freedom, and her defence would have been organised on a popular basis with a national army under national

(Contd.)

Draft No. I. dated Allahabad, April 27th 1942: Working Committee	Draft No. I, dated Allahabad, April 27th, 1942: Working Committee, as finally corrected on the recovered copy	All India Congress Committee Resolution, May 1st, 1942
(1)	(2)	(3)
<p>to maintain their hold over India. The Princes need have no fear from unarmed India.</p> <p>The question of majority and minority is a creation of the British Government and would <i>disappear</i> on their withdrawal.</p> <p>For all these reasons the Committee appeals to Britain, for the sake of her own safety, for the sake of India's safety and for the cause of world peace to let go her hold on India even if she does not give up all Asiatic and African possessions.</p> <p><i>The Committee desires to assure the Japanese Government and people that</i> India bears no enmity either towards Japan or towards any other nation. India only desires freedom from all alien domination. But in this fight for freedom the Committee is of opinion</p>	<p>Government and would <i>solve itself</i> on their withdrawal.</p> <p>For all these reasons the Committee appeals to Britain, for the sake of her own safety, for the sake of India's safety and for the cause of world peace to let go her hold on India even if she does not give up all Asiatic and African possessions.</p> <p>India bears no enmity towards any foreign nation. India only desires freedom from all alien domination. In her fight for freedom the Committee is of opinion that India while welcoming universal sympathy does not stand in need of foreign military aid. Her past experience teaches her that it is harmful to India's interests and dangerous to the cause of India's freedom to introduce foreign soldiers in India. She therefore hopes that the British Government as</p>	<p>control and leadership, and with intimate contacts with the people. A free India would know how to defend herself in the event of any aggressor attacking her. The present Indian army is in fact an offshoot of the British army and has been maintained till now mainly to hold India in subjection. It has been completely segregated from the general population, who can in no sense regard it as their own.</p> <p>The essential difference between the imperialist and the popular conceptions of defence is demonstrated by the fact that while foreign armies are invited to India for that defence, the vast manpower of India herself is not utilised for the purpose. India's past experience teaches her that it is harmful to her interest and dangerous to the cause of her freedom to introduce foreign armies</p>

that India while welcoming universal sympathy does not stand in need of foreign military aid. India will attain her freedom through her non-violent strength and will retain it likewise. Therefore the Committee hopes that Japan will not have any designs on India. But if Japan attacks India and Britain makes no response to its appeal the Committee would expect all those who look to Congress for guidance to offer complete non-violent non-cooperation to the Japanese forces and not render any assistance to them *It is no part of the duty of those who are attacked to render any assistance to the attacker. It is their duty to offer complete non-cooperation.*

It is not difficult to understand the simple principle of non-violent non-cooperation:

1. We may not bend the knee to the aggressor or obey any of his orders.
2. We may not look to him for any favours nor fall to his bribes. But we may not bear him any malice nor wish him ill.
3. If he wishes to take possession of

also other foreign nations will remove their legions and henceforth stop their further introduction. They know fully well that there is inexhaustible manpower in India which remains untapped on account of the policy of distrust of the Indian people by the British Government. India will attain her freedom through her own strength and will retain it likewise. India having no quarrel with Japan or any other nation, the Committee hopes that Japan will not have any designs on India. But if in spite of this Japan attacks India and Britain makes no response to her appeal the Committee would expect all those who look to Congress for guidance to offer complete non-violent non-cooperation to the Japanese forces and not render any assistance to them.

We may not bend the knee to the aggressor nor obey any of his orders.

We may not look to him for any favours nor fall to his bribes. But we may not bear him any malice nor wish him ill.

If he wishes to take possession of our homes and our fields we will refuse to give them up even if we have to die in the

in India. It is significant and extraordinary that India's inexhaustible manpower should remain untapped, while India develops into a battleground between foreign armies fighting on her soil or on her frontiers, and her defence is not supposed to be a subject fit for popular control. India resents this treatment of her people as chattels to be disposed of by foreign authority.

The A.I.C.C. is convinced that India will attain her freedom through her own strength and will retain it likewise. The present crisis, as well as the experience of the negotiations with Sir Stafford Cripps, makes it impossible for the Congress to consider any schemes or proposals which retain, even in a partial measure, British control and authority in India. Not only the interests of India but also Britain's safety, and world peace and freedom demand that Britain must abandon her hold on India. It is on the basis of independence alone that India can deal with Britain or other nations.

The Committee repudiates the idea that freedom can come to India through

(Contd.)

Draft No. 1, dated Allahabad, April 27th 1942: Working Committee	Draft No. 1, dated Allahabad, April 27th, 1942: Working Committee. as finally corrected on the recovered copy	All India Congress Committee Resolution, May 1st, 1942
(1)	(2)	(3)
<p>our fields we will refuse to give them up even if we have to die in the effort to resist him.</p> <p>4. If he is attacked by disease or is dying of thirst and seeks our aid we may not refuse it.</p> <p>5. In such places where the British and Japanese forces are fighting our non-cooperation will be fruitless and unnecessary. <i>At present our non-cooperation with the British Government is limited. Were we to offer them complete non-cooperation when they are actually fighting, it would be tantamount to placing our country deliberately in Japanese hands.</i> Therefore not to put any obstacle in the way of the British forces will often be the only way of demonstrating our non-cooperation with the Japanese. Neither may we assist the British in any active</p>	<p>effort to resist him.</p> <p>If he is attacked by disease or is dying of thirst and seeks our aid we may not refuse it.</p> <p>In places where the British and Japanese forces are fighting our non-cooperation will be fruitless and unnecessary. Not to put any obstacles in the way of the British forces will often be the only way of demonstrating our non-cooperation with the Japanese. Neither may we assist the British in any active manner. Judging from their attitude, the British Government do not need any help from us beyond our non-interference. They desire our help as slaves—a position we can never accept.</p> <p>If, in spite of our non-violent resistance, any part of the country falls into Japanese hands we may not destroy our crops, water-supply, &c., if only</p>	<p>interference or invasion by any foreign nation, whatever the professions of that nation may be. In case an invasion takes place, it must be resisted. Such resistance can only take the form of non-violent non-cooperation, as the British Government has prevented the organisation of national defence by the people in any other way. The Committee would therefore expect the people of India to offer complete non-violent non-cooperation to the invading forces and not to render any assistance to them. We may not bend the knee to the aggressor nor obey any of his orders. We may not look to him for favours nor fall to his bribes. If he wishes to take possession of our homes and our fields we will refuse to give them up even if we have to die in the effort to resist them. In places wherein the British and the</p>

manner. *If we can judge from their recent attitude, the British Government do not need any help from us beyond our non-interference. They desire our help only as slaves.*

It is not necessary for the Committee to make a clear declaration in regard to the scorched earth policy. If, in spite of our non-violent resistance, any part of the country falls into Japanese hands we may not destroy our crops, water-supply, &c., if only because it will be our endeavour to regain them. The destruction of war material is another matter and may under certain circumstances be a military necessity. But it can never be the Congress policy to destroy what belongs to, or is of no [sic] use to, the masses.

Whilst non-cooperation against the Japanese forces will necessarily be limited to a comparatively small number and must succeed if it is complete and genuine, the true building up of Swaraj consists in the millions of India whole-heartedly working the constructive programme. Without it the whole nation cannot rise from its age-

because it will be our endeavour to regain them. The destruction of war material is another matter and may under certain circumstances be a military necessity. But it can never be the Congress policy to destroy what belongs to or is of use to the masses.

Direct non-cooperation against the Japanese forces will necessarily be limited. *Its complete and lasting success* and also the true building up of Swaraj depend on the millions of India whole-heartedly working the constructive programme. Without it the whole nation cannot rise from its age-long torpor. Whether the British remain or not it is our duty always to wipe out unemployment, to bridge the gulf between rich and poor, to banish communal strife, to exorcise the demon of untouchability, to reform dacoits and save the people from them. If crores of people do not take a living interest in this nation-building work, freedom in *terms of the masses* must remain a dream and unattainable by either non-violence or violence.

invading forces are fighting our non-cooperation will be fruitless and unnecessary. Not to put any obstacle in the way of British forces will often be the only way of demonstrating our non-cooperation with the invader. Judging from their attitude the British Government do not need any help from us beyond our non-interference.

The success of such a policy of non-cooperation and non-violent resistance to the invader will largely depend on the intensive working out of the Congress constructive programme and more especially the programme of self-sufficiency and self-protection in all parts of the country

(Contd.)

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long torpor. Whether the British remain or not it is our duty always to wipe out unemployment, to bridge the gulf between rich and poor, to banish communal strife, to exorcise the demon of untouchability, to reform dacoits and save the people from them. If crores of people do not take a living interest in this nation-building work, freedom must remain a dream and unattainable by either non-violence or violence.

Foreign soldiers

The A.I.C.C. is of opinion that it is harmful to India's interests and dangerous to the cause of India's freedom to introduce foreign soldiers in India. It therefore appeals to the British Government to remove these foreign legions and henceforth stop further

introduction. It is crying shame to bring foreign troops in spite of India's inexhaustible manpower and is a proof of the immorality that British Imperialism is.

Note: Opposite this place in the margin the following is written but is crossed out:

The A.I.C.C. therefore requests Mahatma Gandhi to guide the Congress organisation in carrying out the programme of non-violent non-cooperation when and where it becomes necessary.

C.D. Parkin
Superintendent of Police, C.I.D., S.B., U.P.,
6th May 1942.

*Lord Lunithgow had already transmitted almost the full text of this resolution to Mr. Amery in telegram 1189-G of 2 May, which stated that above 180 members of the Committee had been present, and that the resolution, which was moved by Pandit Pant and seconded by Rajendra Prasad, had been passed by a large majority, only four members voting against it.

The penultimate sentence of the text given in the telegram ran as follows: "They desire our help only as slaves—position we can never accept." The telegram noted that this sentence had been added to the original draft in the course of discussion, and that other amendments, including the deletion of mention of non-violence in order to permit armed resistance, were withdrawn or rejected.

38. *From Sir M. Hallett to Lord Linlithgow*

31 May 1942

My dear Lord Linlithgow,

This is in continuation of my letter No. UP.-137, dated May 10th 1942.

I told Your Excellency while I was in Delhi that in view of information received that the Congress Com..nittee contemplated broadcasting the banned resolution about molestation of women, I had agreed to a search being made of their office at Allahabad. I also gave Your Excellency a telegram showing the results of the search. I have not seen all the various documents which were seized but I think it desirable to bring to your notice a very important document and I therefore enclose a copy of it. This appears to be a record of the discussion in the Congress Working Committee on the "war resolution". This record removes the few doubts which I previously felt about the authorship of the typed draft of which I have sent you a photostat; it is clear that Gandhi was responsible for the first draft and that the final draft was by Nehru. Nehru apparently took the realist view that if Gandhi's draft was accepted, Congress became a passive partner of the Axis powers. He also, it may be noted, said that it was Gandhi's view that Japan and Germany will win.

2. Briefly the cleavage of opinion was as follows.

Nehru, Rajagopalachari, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu and Bhulabhai Desai took the commonsense view that withdrawal of British at this stage must inevitably mean Japanese occupation. Rajendra Prasad, Kripalani and Vallabhbhai Patel seemed to be blind followers of Gandhi's lead and to regard him as infallible. The two United Provinces representatives, Pant and Acharya Narendra Deva, seemed to have their heads in the clouds and to hold that if given self-government, all problems would solve themselves.

The voting is interesting as showing the cleavage of opinion.

3. The general impression formed is that though there are differences of opinion about Japan and the war, there is complete unanimity about hatred of Britain. There is also as usual no sign of recognition that there is any Indian opinion other than that of Congress.

4. It is hardly profitable to speculate about Gandhi's next move, though of course there are numerous rumours. But it looks to me as if now that the Japanese menace has apparently decreased, partly owing to the monsoon, partly owing to our growing air power, Nehru and his followers may swing round more to the anti-British policy of Gandhi.

5. The most recent reports which I had from districts show that Congress is interesting itself in compensation for lands taken up for aerodrome construction. In Benares the ex-Minister, Sampurnanand, had offered to help to get the matter settled, which is satisfactory. The Congress policy of urging cultivators to store

and hoard their grain still continues and may give rise to trouble.

Yours sincerely,
M.G. Hallett

Enclosure:

(Copy of a record of the discussion in the Congress Working Committee on the War Resolution)

Gandhiji was not present at this meeting of the Working Committee. But he sent from Wardha a draft resolution for the consideration of the Committee. Miraben who brought the draft explained how Gandhiji's mind was working along the lines sketched in it. The Committee gave earnest and careful consideration to the draft.

The draft contained the following points:

- (i) A demand to the British Government to clear out.
- (ii) India is a zone of war as a result of British Imperialism.
- (iii) No foreign assistance needed for the freedom of the country.
- (iv) India has no quarrel with any country.
- (v) If Japan invaded India it shall meet with non-violent resistance.
- (vi) Form of non-cooperation laid down.
- (vii) Foreign soldiers a grave menace to Indian freedom.

JAWAHARLALJI: Gandhiji's draft is an approach which needs careful consideration. Independence means, among other things, the withdrawal of British troops. It is proper; but has it any meaning our demanding withdrawal? Nor can they reasonably do it even if they recognise independence. Withdrawal of troops and the whole apparatus of civil administration will create a vacuum which cannot be filled up immediately.

If we said to Japan that her fight was with British Imperialism and not us she would say, "We are glad the British army is withdrawn; we recognise your independence. But we want certain facilities now. We shall defend you against aggression. We want aerodromes, freedom to pass our troops through your country. This is necessary in self-defence." They might seize strategic points and proceed to Iraq, &c. The masses won't be touched if only the strategic points are captured. Japan is an imperialist country. Conquest of India is in their plan. If Bapu's approach is accepted we become passive partners of the Axis powers. This approach is contrary to the Congress policy for the last two years and a half. The Allied countries will have a feeling that we are their enemies.

KRIPALANIJI, intervening, said that the draft was a declaration of their stand. England and America might put what interpretation they liked but they (the Congress) had no designs against them.

MAULANA SAHIB: What is our position? Shall we tell the British Government to go and allow the Japanese and Germans to come or do we want the British Government to stay and stem the new aggression?

PANTJI: I want the right of self-government and we shall exercise it as we like. If the British troops and the rest must withdraw let them do so by all means and we shall shift for ourselves.

JAWAHARLALJI: A draft like this weakens their [the British Government's] position. They will treat India as an enemy country and reduce it to dust and ashes. They will do here what they did in Rangoon.

VALLABHBHAI PATEL: The draft says to the British, "You have proved your utter incompetence. You cannot defend India. We cannot defend it either because you won't let us to do. But if you withdraw there is a chance for us."

ASAF ALI: The draft asks us to accept non-violence for all time.

ACHYUT PATWARDHAN: It was put to Gandhiji. He said that the Congress can take *the stand* that under existing circumstances non-violence was the best policy.

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU: The whole background of the draft is one which will inevitably make the world think that we are passively lining up with the Axis powers. The British are asked to withdraw. After the withdrawal we are to negotiate with Japan and possibly come to some terms with her. These terms may include a large measure of civil control by us, a certain measure of military control by them, passage of armies through India, &c.

KRIPALANIJI: Why should it mean passage of armies through India, &c.? Just as we call upon the British and the Americans to withdraw their armies so also we ask others to keep out of our frontiers. If they do not, we fight.

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU: Whether you will like it or not, the exigencies of the war situation will compel them to make India a battleground. In sheer self-defence they cannot afford to keep out. They will walk through the country. You can't stop it by non-violent [non-]cooperation. Most of the population will not be affected by the march. Individuals may resist in a symbolic way. The Japanese armies will go to Iraq, Persia, &c., throttle China and make the Russian situation more difficult.

The British will refuse our demand for military reasons apart from others. They can't allow India to be used by Japan against them. Our reaction in the event of refusal will be a passive, theoretical lining up with the Axis powers. Japan may have an excuse for attack. We get involved in a hopeless logical quandary. We get hostility from every other element outside the Axis powers. Japan will occupy strategic points. We get no chance to offer mass C.D. Our policy of sympathy with one group is completely changed.

So far as the main action is concerned there is no difficulty about Bapu's draft. But the whole thought and background of the draft is one of favouring

Japan. It may not be conscious. Three factors influence our decisions in the present emergency: (i) Indian freedom, (ii) sympathy for certain larger causes, (iii) probable outcome of the war—who is going to win? It is Gandhiji's feeling that Japan and Germany will win. This feeling unconsciously governs his decision. The approach in the draft is different from mine.

ACHYUT PATWARDHAN: I agree with Jawaharlalji's background but there are certain difficulties. The British Government is behaving in a suicidal manner. If we do not take decisions Jawaharlalji's attitude will lead to abject and unconditional cooperation with British machinery which must collapse. If the battle of India is to be fought by Wavell, we shall do ourselves discredit if we attach ourselves to him. We talk of allying ourselves with the Allied nations. I doubt if America is a progressive force. The existence of the American army in India is not a fact which improves our situation. I was opposed to the Poona offer but not to talks with Cripps. Jawaharlalji's statement after the negotiations broke down distressed me. The trend of thought it disclosed lands us in a position which obliges us to offer unconditional cooperation to British. Our cooperation with British is an invitation to Japan.

RAJENDRA BABU: We cannot produce the proper atmosphere unless we adopt Bapu's draft. The Government has closed the door on armed resistance. We have only unarmed resistance to offer. We have therefore to strengthen Bapu's hands.

GOVIND BALLABH PANT: There is no difference of opinion so far as non-violence is concerned. There may be two opinions as to its effectiveness. Non-violent non-cooperation is not meant to be a demonstration. It is designed to prevent invasion or resist occupation. What will be our attitude to armed resistance? Shall we assist it or at least do nothing to hamper it?

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU: It retains the approach in Bapu's original draft. The approach is a variation from the attitude we have taken up about allies. At least I have committed myself to that sympathy 100 per cent. It would be dishonourable for me to resign from that position. There is no reason why that choice should arise. But it has arisen somewhat in this approach. The portion of the draft about resistance has some substance. The portion about minorities, princes, is unrealistic. We go on thinking in terms of what was and not what is and that is a dangerous thing in a rapidly changing situation. There is no difference among us about (i) our reactions to Government, (ii) our total inability to cooperate with the Government. Our programme of self-sufficiency and self-protection helps the Government but that cannot be helped. (iii) We do not embarrass the British war-effort because that in itself would mean aid to the invader. We agree on these points but we have different ways of getting at them. It is true that since my approach is different my emphasis too would be different.

PANTJI: One test to apply to the draft is: whether it is consistent with our previous resolutions. The language about the condemnation of Cripps proposals is highly exaggerated. If the proposals were so bad why did we

spend so much time over them? My attitude today is: we must do our utmost to defend the country and swallow many things. If I can't cooperate with the British it is because it is not consistent with our dignity. But the approach in the draft makes every soldier I see my enemy.

ASAF ALI: The draft will [not] make any effective appeal to the Axis powers. Telling the British to withdraw will do nobody any good.

BHULABHAI DESAI: No resolution is called for. We passed at Wardha [one] which expressed our definite position. The resolution is made in an unreal way. It is inconsistent with our previous stand. We have said that if offered an opportunity we shall side with the Allies.

RAJAJI: I do not think the changed draft is different from the original. We appeal to Britain and Japan. The appeal to Britain will fail but certain tangible results will follow. The entire policy of the Congress will be reinterpreted and the new interpretation will go terribly against us. Japan will say: "excellent".

I do not agree that if Britain goes away India will have some scope for organising itself even if Japan should make some headway. Japan will fill the vacuum created by the British withdrawal. Our reaction to evils of Britain should not make us lose our sense of perspective. It is no use getting upset on small matters. Do not run into the arms of Japan, which is what the resolution comes to.

DR. PATTABHI: It is a comprehensive and appropriate draft. A time has come when we must realise ourselves. After the rejection of Cripps proposals we must reconsider our attitude and restate our position. We have varied our position from time to time during the time the war has been on. Poona was a variation from the old position. Bombay was a variation from Poona. Bombay was followed by C.D. and C.D. by Cripps.

SAROJINI NAIDU: The changed draft is much better than the original. There is however a great deal of unnecessary matter in the resolution. The appeal is a rhetorical gesture. It is however good as an expression of our extreme disgust and dislike and hatred of the British Government.

The appeal to Japan is a useless gesture. India is a part of the map they have drawn.

I agree with the non-violent non-cooperation part of the resolution. It can be recast keeping the substance of the original.

The draft is a narrowing of sympathy not consistent with the position we have taken up.

I do not like foreign soldiers. The portion dealing with them is good.

BISWANATH DAS: I see two conflicting views in the Committee. This division of opinion is fatal at this juncture. I generally agree with the draft. The Cripps proposals if accepted would have kept us in permanent bondage. The appeal to Britain to withdraw is very proper. We can tell them that neither will they defend us nor allow us to defend ourselves.

The protest against the introduction of American soldiers in the country is also proper. They have brought in troops from dominions and other foreign

nations. This is highly objectionable and dangerous.

BARDOLI: One portion of the draft is operative and another ideological. If we lay emphasis on the operative portion the differences will be greatly minimised. For joint action I should be prepared to delete the portion which deals with the ideological background. We are already in the danger zone. This is no time for ideological discussion. Let us concentrate on the present action which cannot be anything else than non-violent non-cooperation.

SAIYAMURTI: The changed draft is an improvement. I do not agree with the objection to the entry of foreign soldiers. India may defend herself even with the aid of foreign soldiers. I think we must make an approach to the Muslim League.

ACHYUT PATWARDHAN: I am in general agreement with the draft. The open-door policy is at an end. The resolution emphasises a factor which has been emphasised by every intelligent man, i.e., the war is lost unless the people are in it. The war is an imperialist war. Our policy can be that we take no sides. The world is in the grip of fear complex. I would reconsider the position if the Allies could defeat the Axis. But I see clearly that Britain is going towards the deep. We want to create neutrality. Do not look to Japan or Britain.

JAIRAMDASJI: The criticism that the draft is pro-Japanese is wrong. Opposition to the Japanese invasion is there in the draft.

The mention of foreign armies in the draft is very appropriate. The Indian history bears ample testimony of the highly undesirable consequences which foreign armies have led to. The draft creates an atmosphere of neutrality. The attempt is worth making.

VALLABHBHAI PATEL: I see that there are two distinct opinions in the Committee. We have ever since the outbreak of war tried to pull together. But it may not be possible on this occasion. Gandhiji has taken a definite stand. If his background is unsuitable to some members of the Committee there is the other background which is unsuitable to us. The first four or five paragraphs of the draft is a reply to the Cripps mission. Cripps is a clever fellow. He has gone about saying that his mission has not been a failure. The draft is a perfect reply to his propaganda.

I am not in favour of making any approach to Jinnah. We have made repeated attempts and courted many insults. The Congress today is reeling under two blows, one Cripps' and the other Rajaji's resolutions have done us enormous harm.

I have placed myself in the hands of Gandhiji. I feel that he is instinctively right, the lead he gives in all critical situations.

In Bombay, at the time of the A.I.C.C. meeting there was a difference in approach but the door to negotiation was closed. In Bardoli it was made clear that the door was still open and our sympathies were with allies. It is time the door is finally closed after the repeated insults heaped upon us. I agree with the draft before us. If there is any pro-fascist hint in the draft let it be removed.

ACHARYA NARENDRA DEVA: I do not agree with the view that war is one and

indivisible. The aims of Russia and China are not identical with those of Britain and America. If it is one we should join the war and side with Britain. Our position has not been that we want power because without it we cannot kindle the national spirit; our position has been that if the war was a people's war and there was proof of it in action we are willing to throw in our weight on the side of democracies..

It is necessary to counteract the mischievous propaganda of Cripps. Cripps has been saying that internal differences have prevented a settlement. Rajaji has strengthened his hands. Japanese threat has also influenced our attitude to Britain. It has led us to even modify Poona.

We have to make it clear that Japanese threat has not unnerved us. We can tell the British to go, leaving us to our fate.

Whatever unreality there is in Indian politics is due to the British rule. Let it go and the unreality will disappear.

I am not interested in defeating Hitlerite Germany, I am more interested in war-aims and peace-aims.

MAULANA SAHIB: The discussion has been useful. But it is not clear to me, the differences that divide the two groups.

Cripps was a great hope. He came here with the reputation of a radical. But he proved a great disappointment. He made things worse. Cripps in his statements after the failure of negotiations has emphasised two points: (i) his mission has proved the sincerity of the intentions of the British Government towards India, (ii) the anti-Japanese front is the outcome of his mission.

All this is false propaganda. Great Britain has made it impossible for us to defend our country. But we have something to do about the Japanese aggression.

It is my firm belief that nationalism is the only religion for a subject nation. If I felt that Japan was better than Britain and her invasion was for the good of India I would have said so in public. But it is not so. Gandhiji's prescription is the only alternative though I doubt its effectiveness.

Since the draft presented by Rajendra Babu was not acceptable to Jawaharlalji and a few other members of the Committee, the President asked Jawaharlalji to prepare a draft of his own. Jawaharlalji presented the following draft in the next sitting of the Committee.

The draft sought to cover the points contained in Bapu's draft but the approach was different. The discussions that [followed] showed that the division of opinion revealed in the earlier discussions persisted. Jawaharlalji modified his draft with a view to accommodate better the other group but the difference in approach remained. The draft was not acceptable to the whole Committee. Thereupon the President put the two drafts to vote. Those who voted for Gandhiji's draft as modified by Rajendra Babu were Sardar Vallabhbhai, Rajendra Babu, J.P. Kripalani, Sankarrao Deo, Sarojini Naidu, Prafulla Chandra Ghosh. Those who voted for Jawaharlalji's draft were Jawaharlal Nehru, Govind Ballabh

Pant, Bhulabhai Desai and Asaf Ali. Among the invitees Shri Jairamdas Doulatram, Acharya Narendra Deva, Achyut Patwardhan, Bardoloi, Biswanath Das voted for Rajendra Babu's draft and Shri Satyamurti and Mrs. R.S. Pandit voted for Jawaharlalji's draft.

Rajendra Babu's draft was passed by the Committee in the morning sitting on May 1st. The subject was however reopened by the President in the afternoon sitting. He pleaded with those who supported Rajendra Babu's draft to accept Jawaharlalji's draft and make it a unanimous resolution. It was President's opinion that there was practically no difference between the two drafts though the protagonists of both the drafts held that a vital difference in approach persisted. Supporters of Rajendra Babu's draft yielded to the wish of the President and accepted Jawaharlalji's draft.

APPENDICES

1. *Speech by Mahatma Gandhi at a meeting of the Gandhi Seva Sangh held at Malikanda on 22 February 1940*

Brothers and Sisters,

Are those sitting at the far end able to hear me? If not, please say so.

I was up by 3 o'clock this morning [and] started thinking about the Sangh. I am placing before you my conclusions. Later on you may express your views today itself if you so desire. Some sort of a tentative resolution was placed before you yesterday. I think I should say something about it and also something apart from it.

The views I had expressed on [taking part in] politics have been further confirmed. As I thought about it I felt that unwittingly we had acted wrongly. What I said last night was an indication of this. Hence it is that we have deliberately abjured power politics. If while remaining in the Sangh we wanted to enter into power politics we should have done so openly. For that matter we ought to have changed even the character of the Sangh. But we are not at all equipped for taking part in politics. In politics it is necessary to know what others also are doing and what they intend to do. It would also be necessary to be acquainted with the ideology and politics of the socialists. We do not have so much as a library of political literature.

I have not studied socialism. I have read no books on the subject; I have read one by Jayaprakash.¹ I have also read one book given by Masani.² Sampurnanandji has written a very good book.³ He sent it to me very lovingly and I read that too. This is all my study of socialism. They say countless books have been written on socialism and communism. I have read nothing at all about communism. I do not know how many of you have read books about it.

This thing does not form part of my activity. My mental make-up is quite different. They do not even accept my claim to intelligence. My intelligence is not recognized in the field of politics. Those who are deeply involved in politics laugh at me. They wonder if this is politics. I acquired some status in politics because I had been a fighter, not because of my intelligence. They don't credit me with intelligence capable of winning over others. I believe in socialism and also in communism. I believe in everything, but from my own point of view. I belong to everybody and I belong to none. A believer in non-violence cannot be anybody's opponent. He would wish to build up the science of non-violence with the help of everyone. His is not the politics of opposing or vanquishing anyone.

I do not wish to qualify myself or others for what goes by the name of politics. I had suggested at Hudli that we should enter politics. Unwittingly I made that mistake. You may as well say that unwittingly I followed untruth. Instead of doing well the task for which we were born, we took in hand something else. But whatever happened was for the good. We gained some experience. We discovered that we were not capable of engaging in politics. We have realized our

incompetence. Now we are withdrawing our hands. We did commit a mistake, but now, the moment we have become conscious of our faults, we are being cautious. A mistake, when it is corrected, does not remain a mistake. Our strength grows if we acknowledge our mistakes. I am asking you to realize your limitations, and carry on thoroughly the work for which the Sangh was formed.

Some friends from Noakhali visited me today. They told me: "We accept everything you say. But we are unable to understand what your followers here say. We can agree to what you say. Call it Gandhism, spinning, village industries—we would accept anything. We are your followers. But we are not followers of your followers. Your followers have nothing [to offer]." Whatever these friends said sprang from sheer love. It is a matter over which we should ponder. We entered politics but we could do nothing in that field. Nor could we do our own work. We belonged neither here nor there. Now that we are aware of our folly let us try to remove it.

We used politics to put our principles into practice. Now after some experience we are renouncing politics. The politics which we are renouncing is the politics of acquiring positions of power within the Congress. We cannot take part in this politics. I am not talking about an individual; I am talking about the Sangh. Power politics has no place in the Sangh. An individual with a natural inclination and qualification may remain in politics. But this power politics is such a dreadful snare that even individuals may have to quit it. Their non-violence would be put to the severest test there. They too will quit when they have some bitter experiences. But what I am saying today applies only to the Sangh. The Sangh must definitely renounce the Congress Committees, that is, elections and power politics. My opinion in this matter has hardened. This Sangh is not meant for this kind of politics. I am myself not qualified for it. Your Chairman is much less so. He is a philosopher, a moralist and a writer.

Let me mention the third point in just one sentence. As a matter of fact, you must give up the very name of Gandhism. If not, you will be falling into a blind well. Gandhism is sure to be wiped out. I love to hear the words: "Down with Gandhism." An 'ism' deserves to be destroyed. It is a useless thing. The real thing is non-violence. It is immortal. It is enough for me if it remains alive. I am eager to see Gandhism wiped out at an early date. You should not give yourselves over to sectarianism. I did not belong to any sect. I have never dreamt of establishing any sect. If any sect is established in my name after my death, my soul would cry out in anguish. What we have carried on for all these years is not a sect. We do not have to subject ourselves to any 'ism'. Rather, we have to serve in silence in keeping with our principles.

Whatever people might say, service can never be made into a sect. It is meant for everybody. We shall accept everyone. We shall try to fall in line with everyone. That is the way of non-violence. If we have any 'ism', it is just this. There is nothing like Gandhism. I have no followers. I am my own follower. No, no, even I have not succeeded in being my true follower, have I? Do I put my own thoughts into practice? How then can others be my followers? I would like others

keeping me company and walking the same way. But how can I know who would walk ahead and who would fall behind? You are all my fellow-students and co-workers, fellow-servants and fellow-researchers. Forget the idea of being followers. Nobody is leading and nobody is following. Nobody is a leader and nobody is a follower. We are all going together in one line. I have said this quite often but I am repeating it in order to remind you.

We have to give up offices in the Congress. Let this point be absolutely clear in your minds. Then you would grasp the significance of what I am going to say. I am asked: "Should we withdraw ourselves even from municipal bodies and similar organizations?" I would say that we should withdraw even from municipal bodies. I know what had happened in the case of the Nagpur Municipality. I was amazed to find how much bitterness and hatred had crept into the Congress Municipal Party. I have very little information about it. Gopalrao knows the inside story. There are three factions in the Congress Municipal Party of Nagpur. They are always at daggers drawn. People belonging to all the three factions came to me and narrated their own versions. I was very deeply pained. There is a lot of animosity prevailing in the Provincial Congress Committee also. I told them that the Provincial Congress Committee was under the control of the A.I.C.C. Hence they should approach either Sardar or Rajendra Babu. I would be infinitely pained if any member of the Sangh chose to go into any such organization. What can he attain by going there? We wish to establish rapport with 300 million people. This would happen only when we reduce ourselves to a cipher. What have we to do with rights? Politics of power is unreal. We must tell the people what is real politics. We shall concentrate only on the constructive programme which others not only shun but regard with contempt. The Gandhi Seva Sangh would justify its existence by persistently devoting itself to the constructive programme. There are eighty-four persons among the members of the Sangh taking active part in politics. They would of course leave the Sangh. But I shall presently explain to you what shape the Sangh would take after that.

The Gandhi Seva Sangh has come into existence for the purpose of carrying on the constructive programme. That alone is real politics. We have to lend glory to this real politics by renouncing our rights. What do we care if they do not call it politics? We shall remain within the Congress fold, but keep ourselves away from power and elections.

There is no need to have the Gandhi Seva Sangh for the sake of keeping a register of the list of persons who believe as I do in truth and non-violence. I see no need for such a list. I was thinking yesterday about the future form and functions of the Sangh. I shall now place before you my conclusions. In my view, the Gandhi Seva Sangh has now to become something like an organization for postgraduate studies. All the organizations in the country which carry my name or are run under my supervision or guidance are meant only for the constructive programme. The Charkha Sangh, Gramodyog Sangh, Harijan Sevak Sangh, Talimi Sangh—I guide the functions of all these organizations. I was responsible for the propagation of Hindi throughout the country. For me, these are

inseparable aspects of real politics. I also control the labour union of Ahmedabad. The Gandhi Seva Sangh can undertake a great deal of postgraduate study and research for these organizations. All these organizations cannot take up such work to the required extent as their field of activity is limited. Take for instance the Charkha Sangh. I have laid down its policy which is aimed at giving the maximum wages to the hungry and poor who are idle for nearly six months in a year, and persuading others to buy the khadi produced by these poor people by appealing to their altruism. Self-sufficiency is also one of the functions of the Charkha Sangh, but as auxiliary to its primary objective. It does not include that aspect of self-sufficiency which Prafulla Babu had placed before you. Prafulla Babu had correlated it with non-violence and swaraj. Self-sufficiency in that sense of the term is not included among the functions of the Charkha Sangh. I cannot expect Shankerlal to go and explain to the poor women spinners all the things that the spinning-wheel implies.

All that is your work. Prafulla Babu had said the other day that you should spin at least 100,000 yards of yarn in a year. On calculation I realized that it would mean spinning nearly 300 yards every day to produce 100,000 yards in a year. It would take 45 minutes to spin 300 yards if the wheel and the slivers are good. There are people who do it even in half an hour. I would of course expect the maximum from you. For you the art of spinning should be child's play, for, after all, you are in the postgraduate stage. You would spin sincerely and with great concentration. There are experts who can produce 300 yards of yarn in half an hour. But you would not stop at being expert spinners. You would try, as I am doing, to realize God through the spinning-wheel. Then alone would you pass my test. This is my explanation of Prafulla Babu's scheme.

People from the Charkha Sangh and the Gramodyog Sangh come to you for acquiring the expertise in their respective fields. You would have to achieve perfection and specialize in such things. Everyone cannot become an expert in every field. But everybody can specialize in one thing. Among doctors too some are physicians and some are surgeons. Even in the field of surgery some specialize in the eye, some in the nose and throat. Similarly we should take up some field for specialization. This is not a matter of making money. Other specialists go in for invention and research for the purpose of earning money. We have to become specialists for the purpose of serving the poor and bettering their lot. The Gandhi Seva Sangh would justify its existence in future only if it undertakes such work. If you must continue the Sangh you should continue it in this form or wind it up. If this is not done, the whole world will laugh at us and Gandhism will be killed by our own hands. Let us not deceive ourselves.

We shall follow yet another programme. I have told the labour union people that they would be doomed if they meddled in politics. I have told the Charkha Sangh people that they have nothing to do with politics. I told them that if they got involved in the politics of swaraj, they would be spinning weak yarn as their attention would be divided. They would not be able to do their work properly and they would prove worthless. I told the Harijan Sevak Sangh that it had

nothing at all to do with swaraj. If they stuck to their work, swaraj would issue from it automatically.

But what about you? You will have to understand what Gandhi means when he says he sees God in the spinning-wheel. Should we take it literally or grasp its significance? Or should we accept both? I would suggest that you accept both the meanings. It means that you should see God in every thread [you draw] from the spinning-wheel. Acts of service such as spinning take us nearer to God, and therein lies its significance. You will thus find that all our activities have a far-reaching meaning.

Even its literal meaning has a wider sense. You are all going to do research and make discoveries in this postgraduate laboratory. For that purpose you should have expert knowledge not only of the science of the spinning-wheel but also of the art of spinning. Knowledge and skill would be especially expected of the Gandhi Seva Sangh. Your spinning-wheel should work more efficiently than that of the Charkha Sangh. Your yarn should be fine, strong and may not snap. It would be a matter of shame if your thread snaps. For the expert, his tools should be of the highest quality. There should be something special about your slivers, your implements. I do not wish to make you just skilled labourers. I want to make you expert craftsmen and scientific researchers. I expect something unique from you. The difference between your spinning-wheel and that of the Charkha Sangh should be as much as that between my razor and a barber's. Your implements would be out of the ordinary.

Here you spin from the slivers made by others. But the slivers from which you would be spinning then would be no ordinary slivers. You would improve the process of making slivers. You would make the best slivers yourself and make others improve theirs. Thus you would study the smallest detail just as Vinoba has done. After persistent experiments he has built up a science round everything. He has discovered a new method of making slivers. In Andhra fish-bones are used for this purpose. Vinoba's is a modification of the Andhra method, but the yarn spun from these slivers can well compete with the Andhra yarn. He has sent me cloth woven from the yarn of 40 counts spun from *verum*⁴ cotton. It deserves to be displayed in the exhibition. It is made by a Muslim boy. Your carding process would also be such as to cause trouble to no one. Cotton fibres would not fly about from your carding-bow. Even one suffering from cough would be able to do the carding without a hitch. There would be something special even in your choice of cotton. How could you ever take cotton from the bales? Your ginning process too would be special. For this one needs patience, talent for research and perseverance. If you have achieved all this, you would have followed my suggestion to the very letter.

After this you would have to see if the charkha increases your non-violent powers. Vinoba has composed a couplet comprising the eleven vows. You recite it every day. You would have to find out if the spinning-wheel in any way helps you in observing these vows. There may not be politics in the spinning-wheel of the Charkha Sangh; but you would have to see if it is there in your spinning-wheel. In

other words you would have to see if it increases the strength of the people and whether, in free India, the economic provisions of swaraj could be based on the spinning-wheel. Would it turn people into mere automatons capable of physical labour or would it make them non-violent soldiers of swaraj? You must think about all this. These things do not fall within the purview of the Charkha Sangh. The special task which lies beyond its scope would be your field.

You will have to consider if we can really win swaraj with the help of the spinning-wheel. Are you really convinced of it? Or do you believe in it just because Gandhi says so? Gandhi can see God through the spinning-wheel, or hope to find Him there. But it may as well be a personal matter with him. You will have to find out if this principle can be applied universally. Like Jagadish Chandra Bose you will have to become research scholars in your own field. He had even devised a postgraduate course. I have seen how he remained deeply engrossed in it. This had become the main objective of his life. I used to be his close associate. I had stayed in his house for several days. He had a group of some twenty chosen men. But a few such men, if they are firm in their conviction, can work like millions. This is how experts work. The Charkha Sangh, Gramodyog Sangh, [etc.,] cannot do such work. There, too, there are experts and they also do research. But your field would be much wider and much more specialized. Through them I am trying to serve *Daridranarayana* in particular. Their development will be only along those lines. Your work however would be quite unusual. You would not merely improve the tools and implements, but also see their conformity with our principles. I shall exercise my mind to help you as your co-student; but I want to get the work mainly out of you.

In this way research and discoveries are undertaken everywhere. Look at Germany. How many specialists are there in that country! There they are in need of specialists in the science of violence. We too could do research and make progress in the field of non-violence if we can have a small centre. We have to link the spinning-wheel and related activities with non-violence and ultimately with God.

You will have to consider if all these things are possible. You know that even a society based on violence functions only with the help of experts. We want to bring about a new social order based on truth and non-violence. We need experts to develop this into a science. The world as it functions today represents a mixture of violence and non-violence. The external surface of the world suggests its internal state. A country like Germany which regards violence as God is engaged only in developing violence and glorifying it. We are watching the efforts that the votaries of violence are making. We must also know that those given to violence are watching our activities. They are observing what we are doing for developing our science.

But the way of violence is old and established. It is not so difficult to do research in it. The way of non-violence is new. The science of non-violence is yet taking shape. We are still not conversant with all its aspects. There is a wide scope for research and experiments in this field. You can apply all your talents to it.

For me non-violence is something to be shunned if it is a private virtue. My concept of non-violence is universal. It belongs to the millions. I am here just to serve them. Anything that cannot reach the millions is not for me. It should be so for my colleagues as well. We were born to prove that truth and non-violence are not just rules for personal conduct. They can become the policy of a group, a community, a nation. We have not yet proved this, but that alone can be the aim of our life. Those who do not have this faith or those who cannot acquire it should be good enough to remove themselves. But I have only this dream. I have regarded this alone as my duty. I shall not leave it even if the whole world abandons me. So profound is my faith. I would live only to attain this and die only in that endeavour. My faith gives me new visions every day. Now, in my old age, I am not likely to do anything else. It would be another thing if my mind is corrupted or I have a new vision. But today I am seeing ever new miracles of non-violence. Everyday I have a new vision and I experience a new joy. I am certain that non-violence is meant for all time. It is an attribute of the *atman* and is, therefore, universal since the *atman* belongs to all. Non-violence is meant for everybody and for all time and at all places. If it is really an attribute of the *atman* it should be inherent in us. Nowadays it is said that truth cannot help in trade and politics. Then where can it be of help? Truth is not worth a dime if it cannot be of help in all the fields of life, in all worldly dealings. Of what use would it be in life then? I see every day that truth can be applied to life in all its practical aspects. I have been doing this *sadhana* for more than fifty years now. I have been conveying to you from time to time some of my experiences during this *sadhana*. You too can have glimpses of it.

If the Sangh has to continue it should be for this purpose. If you do not have this much inclination, earnestness or strength, disbanding the Sangh would itself be the pursuit of truth and non-violence. If we do not do so, we would prove guilty, we would be committing the sin of dishonesty. We would be committing yet another sin. We have in our midst a worker like Kishorelalbhai. He is a pure man given to uninterrupted hard work. God has given him a keen intelligence. We would be misusing the services of such a man. Would we take his life even if he offered it himself? But how can I press him? What special work is now left for us? We must relieve him of his responsibility right from today.

The other day I narrated to you the circumstances that should spell the doom of Gandhism. I repeat today that if Gandhism encourages any wrong thing it deserves to be doomed. Truth and non-violence are not just flowers in the sky. They should be manifest in all our words, dealings and acts. Kishorelal does not wish to speak about all his bitter experiences in the Sangh. He is silent because he has forbearance. He conveys it to me just in passing when things go too far. This gives me some idea of the situation. Why is there such vicious estrangement amongst us? We all form one family. We have adopted truth and non-violence. But we are given to strife and dogma and jealousy. Are not truth and non-violence things of this earth then? Do they deserve only to be installed in the heavens? We have learnt our lesson by entering politics. It created antagonism

even among good people in the Sangh.⁵ Oh, we are far away from Rama and Bharata. Kishorelalbhai is a poet too. He gave a poetic interpretation in terms of Rama and Bharata. But here no one is like Rama or Bharata. If we had Rama and Bharata amongst us would such things have happened? What a world of difference between the love of Rama and Bharata and these feuds! These people are miles away from Rama and Bharata.

Why should such differences arise among us when we all belong to the same Sangh and have come here with the sole idea of service? There ought to be only love among us. Are all the people who have come here like this? Do they have cordial relations with each other? If your reply is in the affirmative, I shall have to put you to a very hard test. I am afraid we shall not pass that test. Ask the honest opinion of one another among yourselves. Ask yourselves, and you will realize that we are still far removed from non-violence. Why should we meddle with the Congress when we are so weak? What service can we render there? Why do we not withdraw when we are faced with a rival? What have we to do with positions in the Congress? Why should we think of defeating anyone in an election?

If we are not possessed by the desire for power and feeling of jealousy, why has so much bitterness spread round us? Why do these people come to Malikanda and shout violent slogans? Why is there so much bungling? I would like to ask the Bengali workers present here: 'What gave rise to so much bitterness? Why don't you try to win them over with love? Why don't the leading workers among you go to them and talk to them lovingly?' There are Prafulla Babu and Satis Babu. Let them go to the people who are raising the slogans, mix with them and talk to them with love. I have tried this myself. It is nothing new for me. Surely I am not their rival. I do not want what they desire. They want power, and I have no desire for power at all. Rivalry is possible only when two persons want the same thing. We have to qualify ourselves for their love. That is why we must give up politics, and leave the field open for them. That is the way non-violence functions. For that very reason we must quit politics.

But are we going to remain idle, doing nothing? We shall continue to spin and see if the spinning-wheel dulls our intelligence or sharpens it. We shall study the spinning-wheel. We shall find out what the spinning-wheel signifies, why and how it came into being and why it went out of use and in what way it can be useful to us. The Gandhi Seva Sangh should maintain a special library for this purpose. There will be no other library of its kind anywhere in the world. We shall be free from the bother of Gandhism only when we start working along these lines. Our present opponents will admire us for having such a programme and bless us, although today they are cursing us. Let me know if this thing is beyond your intelligence, strength or wishes. It would only prove that we are not yet qualified to form a new Sangh. But does this mean that what I have said is proved wrong thereby?

I had not imagined this even when this Sangh was formed. Jamnalalji had set up the Sangh when I was in jail.⁶ Jamnalalji is a worker with a pure heart. He opened his coffers when I started the non-cooperation movement. I had appealed

to lawyers to give up their practice. Jamnalalji offered to support one hundred lawyers who would give up their practice and devote themselves to the service of the nation. This was not because he wanted to dominate the Congress but because he wanted to awaken the masses to the power of satyagraha. It was not his intention to send these gentlemen to the Congress. Every time he referred that matter to me he said that these people should be kept away from politics. Subsequently it was decided to use the money for the maintenance of constructive workers instead of the lawyers who had joined the non-cooperation movement. Out of this the Sangh was born. Jamnalalji had never intended to do political work through the Sangh. He was not agreeable again when I expanded the Sangh in 1934. Later on he also opposed my resolution at Hudli. If I am accused of dragging the Sangh into politics I would plead guilty. It would not be right to levy such a charge against Jamnalalji.

Today I gave deep thought to the policy of the Sangh. I had not been able to do this with so much faith. Age has sapped my physical energy. I cannot observe things in all directions. I cannot be alert to all things and always. My body has become weak. I have somehow shouldered my responsibilities to this day. I even wanted to avoid coming to this convention; but I came because Prafulla Babu insisted. After coming here I concentrated my thoughts on the affairs of the Sangh. I placed the conclusions before you. Today my mind is saturated with these thoughts. Kishorelal carried this burden all these years. It was I who brought him into the Sangh. What is his condition today? His body has become weak. I have read his speech. Now Kishorelal cannot work here. Hence I am placing this thing before you with so much concern.

In a way I am only casually mentioning this thing here. If you are not going to have in the Sangh any members who want to take part in politics independently, the Sangh would become quite small. But if it is genuine, it would grow into a huge tree, otherwise it would perish.

Because of politics, 84 out of 243 members go out of the Sangh. Not because they are worthless, but because they are useful in that field and are qualified for the task. How many from the remaining members can accomplish this ideal? For this purpose you should form a committee with three or four members. This committee would prepare, with God as their witness, a list of persons who are qualified to carry on this work. This committee should also be empowered to decide on the future character of the Sangh. On this point you may also place your views before the committee in brief. But do not make speeches. In any case, the Sangh as it is functioning today has to be disbanded. It need not be considered whether or not it should function in future and if it should, in what shape. I have given you an outline of the shape it can take.

The question that now remains is: What should happen to the paid members who number nearly thirty? It is a matter of settling accounts. But the Sangh does not exist for settling accounts, does it? It is Jamnalalji's trust and this is a small matter. Dhotre and Jamnalalji can attend to it. It is not a matter for others to worry about. Let Jamnalalji and others concerned with him think about it. With

this the matter comes to a close.

I am asking the rest of you, if in your view, the Gandhi Seva Sangh should continue to exist. If you want it to continue, it will have to be in the form I have indicated. You will have to study, to research and conduct experiments. And life will then be a grand thing. For that purpose all intellectual, physical and spiritual forces will have to be brought together. It will be a unique thing for the country, and for the world at large, which none may possibly envy. You will be placing before the country and the world the ideal of a new culture by this unity of body, mind and spirit. Can there be a goal loftier than this?

I have placed this serious point before you. If this is beyond your capacity, it is only wise to wind up the Sangh. Only those who can pass the test of truth and non-violence and who are capable of working efficiently with a sense of complete dedication can manage the Sangh in its changed form.

I have explained my points at great length. Now you may express your views.

SWAMI ANAND: ... Will communal unity also form part of the activities of the Sangh? Or has it been kept out?

GANDHIJI: It has not been kept out. It is there all right. Non-violence has no meaning without it. We have no programme for it right now, hence I deliberately omitted to mention it.

SWAMI: I am afraid if we get involved in the work of labour unions and communal unity it also may arouse jealousy and anger in other people. There too we shall come in conflict with them, and we shall have to withdraw from that field as well.

GANDHIJI: If feelings of jealousy and anger oblige us to withdraw it would be proved that we who are experimenting with non-violence are good for nothing. Some people may as well say that non-violence itself is meaningless. From their point of view non-violence would prove to be a great *adharma* instead of a great dharma, for they say that the world functions because of the mixture of violence and non-violence. In their view, it is necessary that these two go hand in hand, otherwise the world would come to a standstill. Labourers have become cowards [they say] and it is necessary to train them in violent protest to build up their self-confidence. The Hindus are also cowards and for them non-violence is not the supreme dharma. I am still receiving letters to this effect. But we have to prove that we can solve labour disputes and communal problems by adopting non-violent methods.

RAM RATAN SHARMA: I wish to place before you one of my difficulties. I requested Kishorelalbhairav to arrange for sending me somewhere to be given some training. He said that he had no provision for such training for me. I had also wanted to shape the Sangh in the manner Bapu has suggested. For that purpose it is necessary that I get some expert training somewhere.

GANDHIJI: The Sangh about which I am thinking can come about after specialized training. It is a different question what we should do for training experts.⁷

SUDHAKAR: Are we giving up politics for good for some time?

GANDHIJI: Who can say it is for good? We are not God, after all. We are talking only about the present.

KRISHNAN NAIR: People attached to the Charkha Sangh, the Gramodyog Sangh, etc., have their own organizations to lean on. But how should we organize those who do not belong to any of these five organizations? Is it not necessary to have for them some kind of an old students' association? Are all our members covered by these five organizations?

GANDHIJI: If you have read the report carefully, you should know how many of our members are working in organizations devoted to constructive programme. This report is a thing which deserves to be studied. It is not an ordinary report. It indicates the number of the members in several ways. They are classified according to their Provinces, their activities and the organizations to which they belong. I was fascinated by the report. Look at the appendix. You find in the report an answer to every point. After reading the report you will realize that we are not going to achieve anything great by having an independent organization like the Gandhi Seva Sangh. Those who would work with complete dedication would not need frequent consultation or guidance at every step. Attaining freedom is not an ordinary thing. For that purpose we would need workers who could carry on their tasks independently and with a sense of dedication. Those who require supervision would work under the aegis of some organization or other. The Sangh does not have to exist for that purpose. We have five organizations devoted to the constructive programme. Most of the members are covered by these organizations. What more can we offer them by having them to continue in the Sangh? The Sangh remains like a sixth finger. And how can we carry on supervision or inspection? We have no means to do it.

KRISHNAN NAIR: This means that the Sangh ceases to exist physically from today.

GANDHIJI: Yes, that is so. Today we are pushing Sita down into the nether world.

PREMABEHN: At the time of the Dandi March⁸ also you said that we were all worthless and disbanded the Ashram. Has a similar situation arisen now? Is this also a preparation for some struggle? Or is it merely an attempt at purification?

GANDHIJI: I did not say that anyone was worthless. And how could I say such a thing so long as people like you are around? But this is only by way of a joke. The fact is that we want to become purer. I do not consider anyone worthless nor call him so. I did not describe anyone in the Sabarmati Ashram as worthless. You would be doing me an injustice by putting such an interpretation on my speeches. All I say is that applying the yardstick we have chosen we have not passed the test. And if we have really followed the principles of truth and non-violence why have these people come here to shout slogans like "Down with Gandhism"? They teach us a lesson that we are yet impure. Otherwise why would they raise such slogans?⁹ Neither you nor I

know if they are being paid. But even if it is true it is a matter for us to think over. Why do people pay them to shout these slogans? Why are they so bitter? We must learn something from this. As far as I am concerned, I have learnt from these demonstrations what I could not learn by seeing you. They have set me thinking. Very few among us would have practised non-violence. In this matter we can have no guidance even from history, for we do not find there instances of such experiments. But if you have a sharp mind like mine, you would find proof of non-violence everywhere in the universe. This world changes every moment. There are so many forces of destruction that nothing remains steady. But the human race is not destroyed in spite of this. It only suggests that non-violence prevails everywhere. I have vision of it. Like the force of gravitation, non-violence is drawing everything in the universe towards itself. Love has this power. Do I not call myself a scientist of non-violence? That is why I am aware of its laws and see them [in action]. We cannot be votaries of non-violence if we do not cherish a feeling of equality for all. If you have such a feeling of equality, you would not resort to protest or violence when anybody raises slogans invoking doom on you. Let us abjure any such practice which creates violent reactions in others. We are changing the character of the Sangh from this point of view. So many people come here to have a glimpse of me. They think I am an incarnation of God. But nobody is an incarnation of God. Or, if anybody is, everybody is. If I am such an incarnation, all of them are also such incarnations. Then why are they drawn towards me like this? It is the law of non-violence at work. There is in me some non-attachment also. Hence I am able to take the detached view that it is not my own power but the power of non-violence. What am I? I am but an embodiment of a thousand faults. When I search my heart I discover nothing but faults. If you take to such introspection you too would go crazy. We must try to control every thought of ours. I try it myself. I have a glimpse of God even in my opponents. You should also have that glimpse of God.

PRABHUDAS: Kishorelalbhai has said in *Sarvodaya* that there should be an organization even of imperfect followers of non-violence. They too must acquire the strength of organization. But from your speeches it seems that there can be no organization of those who practise non-violence imperfectly.

GANDHIJI: I shall not accept your point in your own words. An organization like the Gandhi Seva Sangh cannot be an organization merely of non-violent people. The Sangh was formed under specific circumstances. It was formed with the idea of supervising the work of some twenty or thirty people by giving them financial assistance. Then it expanded, and it was necessary to make improvements in it. But that special purpose is no more. There is no need to have such an organization for the progress of people who follow non-violence imperfectly. An institution is formed only with imperfect people. If men were perfect, no organization would be needed. Non-violence is imbibed even in the Charkha Sangh and the Harijan Sevak Sangh. These also want to

follow the path of peace. The Gandhi Seva Sangh can become an organization of non-violent people only if it has some special programme. But what is the meaning of a mere organization of non-violent people? It is an implied dharma. When we wish to attain non-violence through certain means, an organization is formed. The Gandhi Seva Sangh has adopted no such specific means. We have our institutions for each particular department, which organize various constructive activities. But it is not the function of these institutions to examine how far their activities have helped develop non-violence. I would ask Shankerlal¹⁰ how many persons were paid wages. I would not ask how much progress he made in the direction of non-violence. I would ask a labour union how far it had improved the lot of the workers through peaceful methods. I shall not ask how the labour movement was related to non-violence. The same is true of the Gramodyog Sangh. The same is true of Satis Babu. He does not have to take the test about the progress of non-violence in the Khadi Pratishthan. He can be asked only about how much of good quality oil, paper, khadi or leather he has produced. After all this the point remaining to be considered is to find out in what way we can evolve through them a non-violent culture. We can have an organization for that purpose. But where is the need for an organization merely for those who believe in non-violence? Whatever strength or guidance they need would be available to them from my actions. God Himself would guide them. They would be organized even without an institution.

JAJU: It should be realized that those who are in politics will definitely cease to be members. Now we have to think about the future of the Sangh.

DADA DHARMADHIKARI: Let us wind up this Sangh. The new committee which is to be formed can form a new Sangh if it thinks it necessary.

SANKARRAO DEO: I support Dada's suggestion. It is not proper to discriminate and say that those involved in politics cease to be members of the Sangh and the Sangh continues with the rest of the members.

GANDHIJI: Let it not be forgotten that we are not discriminating when we keep the politically inclined people out of the Sangh. All that we want to do is to eschew politics in the name of the Sangh. Had we been regarding men who are active in politics as inferior persons, we would not allow those persons even to remain in politics. But we are not asking them to quit politics.

SANKARRAO: We are confronted with this whole moral dilemma because we take part in politics even as we remain members of the Sangh. That is why Bapuji has suggested that we change the present character of the Sangh. The present form of the Sangh is not its original form. That is why I suggest we wind up the Sangh as it is functioning today, and restore it to its original form.

GANDHIJI: You may do that.

MAGANBHAI: Politics involves struggle for power which breeds jealousy. Hence the members of the Sangh are being asked to retire from politics or those in politics are being asked to leave the Sangh. But those who are inclined to pursue power will do the same in the field of the constructive programme.

Even today it cannot be said that there is no power struggle or jealousy or bitterness in the field of constructive work. Nor do I see any need of even a research institute for those devoted solely to constructive work. People working in different fields would continue research in their respective fields while remaining with their own organizations. If they have any difficulty, they would consult their departmental head. Or, they would seek guidance from someone in whom they have a special faith.... For that no institution is needed. If you set up a research institute, it would undertake some stray research projects and exercise unnecessary control over other organizations. Apart from conducting research, its function would also be to correlate it with truth and non-violence. Hence it would become an organization exercising superior moral authority. I see no need for such a superior authority. In my view, you are discarding the shape you gave to the Sangh in 1934. And now when we clearly find that it can have no specific function under these conditions, why should we not disband it altogether?

GANDHIJI: Maganbhai, I have understood your point. What you are saying is not quite relevant here. Krishnan Nair correctly observed the other day that this would be purely a research institute. It would place before the people the conclusions of its research. Anyone who is keen would be free to benefit from them. Those who do not find them useful can ignore them. Here the question of dominating others does not arise at all. There is nothing like 'superior moral authority' at the back of it. When there is no question of domination how can it give rise to quarrels?

It is possible that organizations devoted to the constructive programme, such as the Charkha Sangh, etc., may to some extent suffer from bickerings, misuse of authority or arrogance resulting from power. But where do you find in it what we describe as power politics? It is not a representative body formed after an election. It is an organization like a bank. How could power politics get into it? The Congress is a vast organization. It belongs to the millions. It is a representative organization. There is plenty of scope in it for the politics of power. Today the Gandhi Seva Sangh has neither the equipment nor the strength to enter power politics in its own capacity. That is why we are suggesting that those who are taking active part in politics should not remain in the Sangh. Did we ever say that they should give up politics? If they find that by their remaining in politics they are not serving any useful purpose but are instrumental in spreading poison, they would have to get out of it. But today we only ask them that they should not enter politics as members of the Sangh. We must deny them this much.

The question now is: What form should the Sangh take? I have given an outline. I cannot think of an alternative method. Those who want to engage in other activities like the study of politics can do it independently. This does not fall within my purview. For me, true politics consists in linking up the constructive programme with swaraj. I have never studied what people describe as politics. I carried on agitation even in South Africa; but I did not

study politics. For me whatever I did was politics. I do not say that I have never taken part in politics. On my arrival in India, as chance would have it, the reins of the Congress fell into my hands. I remained with the Congress so long as I could be of service and then retired from it.¹¹ It seems to me that I have rendered a great service by going out of the Congress. It was my attitude of non-violence. My non-violent attitude served its purpose well. Non-violence had its place in the Congress even after I went out of it. Now I leave the politics of the Congress to Rajendra Babu and Vallabhbhai. If they find poison spreading by their remaining there, they too should quit. But it is not easy to quit. If the people insist on their remaining in politics and if the Congress and its President find it necessary that they should be there, then it becomes difficult for them to go out. But in that case they should not remain with the Sangh.

We have to keep the Sangh untouched by the politics of power and groupism. We have to work in studied silence. That alone would be the beginning of real politics. The field of constructive work is very vast. Let us study it. Let us do research and make discoveries in that field. Shankerlal [alone] cannot shoulder this responsibility. This is the only programme I have for the Sangh. I can only give you what I have. A new vista is opening before you for an experiment in non-violence. You can expand it as much as you choose. Even if you cannot expand it, its present scope itself is sufficient. Your work will inspire others in their research. I am not talking of ordinary inventions. Am I going to be satisfied by haphazard discoveries? Only when someone has something great should he place it before the world. That thing should be so extraordinary that the world should be wonderstruck by it. For having such a Sangh we should also have people who would be crazy about it.

I have put before you everything in simple and straightforward words. Whatever work we do, we have to keep away from power politics and groupism. The Congress is guiding the politics of the whole nation. Those among us who want to render service by being on Congress Committees will not be with the Sangh from now. It is possible to prepare for civil disobedience even by remaining out of the Congress. The Congress represents the whole nation. Hence it has to reflect its views in its programmes and resolutions. But we have to do silent service in our independent field.

KRISHNAN NAIR: If the Sangh is continued, there is the danger of the emergence of a sect in your name. Just as we are scared of groupism in politics, we should also be scared of a sect emerging in your name in the form of the Sangh. This Sangh which has carried your name has done no extraordinary work in your own lifetime. Who knows what would happen after you are gone? Hence it is just as well that the Sangh be disbanded.

GANDHIJI: There is, no doubt, the danger of forming a sect. In this matter I take as much precaution as possible.

MULCHAND AGRWAL: In these two or three days Bapuji has said the same things that he has been saying for the last ten or fifteen years. He has said

nothing new. All this trouble has arisen because the members of the Sangh were permitted to take part in politics. Hence it would be enough to correct this. It seems impracticable to wind up this Sangh and form another. Let there be some improvements in the present set-up. We need not have a new set-up.

JAJU: It is not a question of breaking up. We are reorganizing it. Even those who are in favour of closing it down desire its reconstitution. We had reconstituted the Sangh in 1934. We are now doing it again in 1940.

BABALBHAI: Inventors would be produced by organizations like the Charkha Sangh, etc. They alone would be the experts in their respective fields. No special research institute is needed for them. They can correlate their work with truth and non-violence.

GANDHIJI: You do not expect me to answer this point, do you? The answer is contained in whatever I have said.

PUNDALIK: Does withdrawal from politics as members of the Sangh indicate that politics of power is a bad thing? Why should we not take part in politics of power after remaining out of the Sangh? Why should we not prove for the world that the best possible means can be employed even in politics of power?

GANDHIJI: Why should we meddle with politics of power while we remain in the Sangh? I do not wish to give my view even about one individual doing it or not doing it. I do not have enough material about it. I do not know how far those who accept power observe non-violence and stand for truth. You would be put to test if you take part in politics of power. I cannot say to what extent you would pass that test. Vallabhbhai is conducting the experiment by remaining in politics. He would leave it when he finds that it is not proper for him to be there. The Sangh does not wish to take any responsibility in this matter. It is left to the conscience of each individual. Each should regard his own conscience as the authority. No outsider can take any decision in the matter. For instance, Vallabhbhai is engaged in [political] work. But I do not know his mind. I do not know Vallabhbhai's feelings, nor yours. After all, I am no God, am I?

SWAMI ANAND: The Government has set up Rural Reconstruction Boards. Should we withdraw from these Boards as well? After two years these Boards will be elected bodies. The Bombay Board will be elected after six months.

GANDHIJI: We may remain with the Boards so long as they are not infected by power politics. If the politics of power starts affecting them, we should quit. This is a matter to be decided independently for one's own self.

It is quite likely that the committee which we are going to form may not be able to finish its work here in Malikanda. But it should nevertheless fix a time-limit for submitting its conclusions. If people are not offering their names, Kishorelal is of course there. I am there too.¹²

¹ *Why Socialism?* (1936).

² Mr Masani.

³ *Samajvad* (1936).

⁴ A variety of cotton largely grown in the former Berar State.

⁵Dhotre then pointed out that Kishorelal had discussed these feuds in an article "Rama aur Bharata" in *Sarvodaya*, a Hindi monthly edited by D.B. Kalelkar and Dada Dharmadhikari
⁶In 1922-23.

⁷Narahari Parikh, Dada Dharmadhikari and Gopabandhu Chowdhary then expressed concurrence with Gandhiji's suggestion to disband the present Sangh and to set up a new one
⁸In March 1930.

⁹At this stage someone said some people believed that they were paid for this.

¹⁰Shankarlal Banker, Secretary, Akhil Bharatiya Charkha Sangh

¹¹In 1934.

¹²A Sub-Committee consisting of Gandhiji, Kishorelal Mashruwala, Vallabhai Patel, Shrikrishnadas Jaju, Gopabandhu Chowdhary, Gangadharrao Deshpande, V.V. Dastane and Prafulla Chandra Ghosh was formed

2. *Draft Resolution by Mahatma Gandhi, approved at a meeting of the A.I.C.C. Working Committee held at Patna on 1 March 1940 and recommended for adoption at the Congress session at Ramgarh*

This Congress, having considered the grave and critical situation resulting from the war in Europe and British policy in regard to it, approves of and endorses the resolutions passed and the action taken on the war situation by the A.I.C.C. and the Working Committee. The Congress considers the declaration by the British Government of India as a belligerent country, without any reference to the people of India, and the exploitation of India's resources in this war as an affront to them which no self-respecting and freedom-loving people can accept or tolerate. The recent pronouncements made on behalf of the British Government in regard to India demonstrate that Great Britain is carrying on the war fundamentally for imperialist ends and for the preservation and strengthening of her Empire, which is based on the exploitation of the people of India, as well as of other Asiatic and African countries. Under these circumstances, it is clear that the Congress cannot in any way, directly or indirectly, be party to the war, which means continuance and perpetuation of this exploitation. The Congress, therefore, strongly disapproves of Indian troops being made to fight for Great Britain and of the drain from India of men and material for the purpose of the war. Neither the recruiting nor the money raised in India can be considered to be voluntary contributions from India. Congressmen, and those under the Congress influence, cannot help in the prosecution of the war with men, money or material.

The Congress hereby declares again that nothing short of complete independence can be accepted by the people of India. Indian freedom cannot exist within the orbit of imperialism and Dominion Status or any other status within the imperial structure is wholly inapplicable to India, is not in keeping with the dignity of a great nation, and would bind India in many ways to British policies and economic structure. The people of India alone can properly shape

their own constitution and determine their relations to the other countries of the world, through a Constituent Assembly elected on the basis of adult suffrage.

The Congress is further of opinion that while it will always be ready, as it ever has been, to make every effort to secure communal harmony, no permanent solution is possible except through a Constituent Assembly, where the rights of all recognized minorities will be fully protected by agreement, as far as possible, between the elected representatives of various majority and minority groups, or by arbitration if agreement is not reached on any point. Any alternative will lack finality. India's constitution must be based on independence, democracy and national unity, and the Congress repudiates attempts to divide India or to split up her nationhood. The Congress has always aimed at a constitution where the fullest freedom and opportunities of development are guaranteed to the group and the individual, and social injustice yields place to a juster social order.

The Congress cannot admit the right of the Rulers of Indian States, or of foreign vested interests, to come in the way of Indian freedom. Sovereignty in India must rest with the people, whether in the States or the Provinces, and all other interests must be subordinated to their vital interests. The Congress holds that the difficulty raised in regard to the States is of British creation, and it will not be satisfactorily solved unless the declaration of the freedom of India from foreign rule is unequivocally made. Foreign interests, if they are not in conflict with the interests of the Indian people, will be protected.

The Congress withdrew the Ministries from the Provinces where the Congress had a majority in order to dissociate India from the war and to enforce the Congress determination to free India from foreign domination. This preliminary step must naturally be followed by civil disobedience, to which the Congress will unhesitatingly resort as soon as the Congress organization is considered fit enough for the purpose, or in case circumstances so shape themselves as to precipitate a crisis. The Congress desires to draw the attention of Congressmen to Gandhiji's declaration that he can only undertake the responsibility of declaring civil disobedience when he is satisfied that they are strictly observing discipline and are carrying out the constructive programme prescribed in the Independence Pledge.

The Congress seeks to represent and serve all classes and communities without distinction of race or religion, and struggle for Indian independence is for the freedom of the whole nation. Hence the Congress cherishes the hope that all classes and communities will take part in it. The purpose of civil disobedience is to evoke the spirit of sacrifice in the whole nation.

The Congress hereby authorizes the All-India Congress Committee, and in the event of this being necessary, the Working Committee, to take all steps to implement the foregoing resolution as the Committee concerned may deem necessary.

3. Speech by Mahatma Gandhi on 14 March 1940 at the Khadi and Village Industries Exhibition at Ramgarh

Opening the exhibition, Mahatma Gandhi said: "I believe through khadi we can make the villagers of India self-conscious and self-sufficient and give them such strength that they will be able to take steps for their uplift.¹

"You can show the villagers that they have in their possession crafts that can stand the invasion of bombs from aeroplanes. But they are ignorant of their treasures which have been mostly looted, and are on the brink of extinction. We have to awaken them to a sense of those treasures and dispel their ignorance and darkness. That is the function of these exhibitions."

Mahatma Gandhi paid a tribute to Mr. Shankerlal Banker of A.I.S.A. who had worked with zeal for the improvement of khaddar and village industries. Expressing his appreciation of the numerous exhibits, he declared that India made an onward march with regard to cottage industries. Despite the forces of obstruction good progress had been maintained. The economic potentialities of village industries were indeed very great.

He urged that villagers should be enlightened with regard to the position obtaining in the world at large and how they were being exploited. Rich people had a great responsibility inasmuch as they could uplift and enrich rural life by supporting village industries. The Congress, for fifty years now, had been actively engaged in rendering such assistance.

No struggle was needed for swaraj, it could be obtained very easily and peacefully as also communal unity, he added.

Mahatma Gandhi emphasized the need for educating the villagers in making them conscious of their own potentialities. If they had been rendered unemployed or been exploited, it was mostly due to ignorance, which must be removed and the people made to understand that they need not live always as they had lived in the past and unable to get out of the slough of despondency. They should be made to know something of the outside world and how their land was being exploited. The most effective way to prevent such exploitation lay in reviving the village industries, specially the charkha. The Congress, for the last fifty years, attempted to uplift the villages. These gave birth to the Khadi Sangh and the Talimi Sangh. The former propagated the cult of the charkha while the Talimi Sangh illustrated how communal unity could be achieved.²

"The true Indian civilization is in the Indian villages. The modern city civilization you find in Europe and America, and in a handful of our cities which are copies of the western cities and which were built for the foreigner, and by him. But they cannot last. It is only the handicraft civilization that will endure and stand the test of time. But it can do so only if we can correlate the intellect with the hand. The late Madhusudan Das used to say that our peasants and workers had, by reason of working with bullocks, become like bullocks; and he was right. We have to lift them from the estate of the brute to the estate of man, and that we can do only by correlating the intellect with the hand. Not until they learn to work intelligently

and make something new every day, not until they are taught to know the joy of work, can we raise them from their low estate."

A Bombay or a Calcutta did not represent true India, but it was the seven lakhs of villages that were spread throughout the country which were real India. The villagers must be made to realize their own inherent strength and capacities and taught to depend on themselves for their vital needs. They should be made to produce their own food and clothing, which could be done by successfully working out the programmes of khadi and village industries.

Proceeding, Mahatma Gandhi laid particular emphasis on the Talimi Sangh (basic education), which he claimed could solve the communal problem. As a matter of fact the working of the scheme so far had clearly demonstrated that this end could be achieved. The scheme of basic education, he asserted, was not inspired by any partisan motive. It was absolutely non-communal. The scheme had been often criticized by various people from different points of view, but he was convinced that this scheme was capable of bringing about complete harmony between Hindus and Muslims.

Continuing his speech, Gandhiji said, any reform in India must begin with the villages.

Gandhiji conceded that village crafts could not be exported. He did not want it. He wanted to make the poor village get food and clothing. Since 1919, the message of khadi had been placed before the country. The Charkha Sangh, the village uplift scheme as also the new Talimi Sangh were the outcome of the same. He hoped people would devote more time to the exhibition.

Reiterating the importance of village industries, Mahatma Gandhi earnestly pleaded that everyone in this country should take to them seriously for the emancipation of India.

¹The following paragraph is from *Harijan*.

²The following paragraph is from *Harijan*.

4. Discussion at a Congress Working Committee meeting held at Ramgarh on 15 March 1940¹

Gandhiji read out a draft resolution sent by Jayaprakash Narayan and said: "If some such statement is made on behalf of the Congress it will help to educate the masses. It will place before the country a picture of the kind of freedom we aim at."

The proposal was opposed by Abul Kalam Azad, Jawaharlal Nehru and Vallabhbhai Patel.

Gandhiji dropped the proposal. He, however, still held that a declaration would not be amiss in the present situation. It may do us good to tell the people what the meaning and content of our freedom is.

Gandhiji asked the members of the Committee to enlighten him on three questions, viz., (1) what should the Congress stand be if they were confronted with the demand for a division of India into Hindu India and Muslim India, (2) was the country prepared for civil disobedience, (3) what was their precise conception of Constituent Assembly.

This was followed by speeches of Bhulabhai Desai, P.C. Ghosh, Pattabhi Sitaramayya and others including Rajendra Prasad.

Then Gandhiji said: "I want to give you a picture of what I understand by Constituent Assembly. In the transition period we will lay down no conditions for the British Government. The army will remain and so will their administrative machinery. There will be an agreement with the British Government before and after the Constituent Assembly. If we are in a minority we will accept the decisions of the Constituent Assembly, whatever they be, for discipline's sake if for nothing else. If they want the army to remain, we shall not resist. I may not even press for the withdrawal of the army if a minority wants it. If impossible demands are put forward, we will have to submit to them. If corrupt men come and spoil the show we are helpless. The larger the scale of franchise for the Constituent Assembly the better. Mutual goodwill is necessary for the Constituent Assembly to come into being and function efficiently. Without this the British Government may very well use the Princes and the Muslims as counterweight against us.

"All that I have heard from you has strengthened my belief that the country is not ready for civil disobedience. I do not see much chance of improving our preparations. Whatever has been done in U.P. is good but I cannot evolve non-violence from the awakening created there by Jawaharlalji. Khadi will create non-violent strength in the people. I have no doubt we can get complete independence through non-violence. I can fight a whole world with a small disciplined Congress, but the big Congress we have is unwieldy. If the C.D. is started, 'disobedience' will remain and 'civil' disappear. As things are, I dare not start C.D. I may find a way out if [my] present relation with the Congress is severed. I cannot leave my programme. I am not obstinate. I am given no alternative programme. I cannot produce a non-violent army from the agitation that is created by propaganda. The people have to be disciplined by work. Such an army will not go astray. Non-violence in the masses can be easily created.

"Sir Maurice Gwyer said to Bhulabhai in an interview with him that Gandhiji has grown stiffer about the goal. It is true. I do not find any honest response from the other side.

"Inside the country I have my difficulties. I find no suitable material for fight. I shall not start a fight unless my conditions are fulfilled. I don't want people to be crushed. If a fight is launched without proper preparations, it is the poor who will suffer. I had to withdraw from Rajkot as there was no internal strength. Whatever strength there was, was theatrical in character. My withdrawal was a great service to the people of Rajkot; but for it there would have been reaction and suffering. I don't want to do anything which will bring about demoralization.

If the struggle is started and discipline is slack, and every group does what it likes, there will be disaster and the cause will suffer. Everybody admits that there is indiscipline in the Congress and yet everybody participates in it. I don't mind if people get demoralized on account of waiting. That will be a lesser evil.

"An alternative occurs to me. I should be freed from the burden of my connection with you and you go ahead. I will keep myself in reserve. If necessary I may join later.² I may be a broken reed and may land you into unexpected troubles. I might not begin the movement for an indefinite length of time, and I might stop it abruptly. However much you may agree with me, your ahimsa does not go as far as mine. And if after twenty years of practice of it I have not been able to win the affection and trust of the Mussalmans, my ahimsa must be of a very poor quality indeed. Why not then let me further examine myself, and make further researches in non-violence?"

Turning to the Maulana, Gandhiji said: "I have not the slightest doubt that the Congress and the nation can have nothing to lose and everything to gain by the step. There is no question of my distrusting you or other members of the Working Committee or the nation. It is a question of my distrust in myself. I am sure that, if you release me, I may be able to give civil disobedience a purer and a nobler shape."

But the Maulana demurred. He somehow could not reconcile himself to the proposal. "You must not forget," he said, "that it was at your command that I accepted to serve this year, and you cannot now forsake me. One cannot think of civil disobedience without you."

Rajaji said: "Is civil disobedience the only way? Can we not try another method? If we think our strength is small we must relate our demand to our strength."

Gandhiji replied, "I have not given up the idea of resistance but I don't find any suitable atmosphere for it. The man who has tried the experiment throughout his whole life will certainly try it once again. But I have to carry on my shoulders the burden of the Congress organization. I will not think in terms of this organization if you release me. I can start struggle when I find my men ready. I may even do it alone at a pinch. This is what I did at Champaran.³ I did not have behind me then the prestige and the influence of the Congress. I am giving you my mind as it is necessary that you should know my position. The resolution is not yet passed."

The Maulana said: "Your always telling the people that they are not ready for a fight demoralizes them."

"If it does I cannot help," replied Gandhiji. "I cannot lower the demand, from the people or the Government. We are asking for a Constituent Assembly today. I am no more talking in terms of Dominion Status. That has not been the Congress position. That was my position. The Britishers are unwilling to go even so far. I am however giving up that position now."

¹The meeting was attended by Abul Kalam Azad, Sarojini Naidu, Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel, Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Jamnalal Bajaj, Patabhi Sitaramayya, Bhulabhai Desai, Sankarrao

Deo, Prafulla Chandra Ghosh, Harekrushna Mahtab and J.B. Kripalani. Rajendra Prasad presided. C. Rajagopalachari and Gandhiji were present by special invitation. The Working Committee met from March 15 to 19, 1940.

²The report in *Harijan* here adds: "It would free them from what might be acting upon them as an incubus, and it would at the same time leave him free to pursue his experiment of ahimsa more intensively and without thought of the millions who looked to him for direction."

³In 1917.

5. *Speech by Mahatma Gandhi at a meeting of the Subjects Committee held at Ramgarh on 18 March 1940*

Since I went out of the Congress at Bombay,¹ there has been an understanding between me and the Working Committee that I should not be asked to speak at the A.I.C.C. or the Subjects Committee or the open session, and² should be allowed to conserve the little strength that is left in me. I have usually been attending the meetings of the Working Committee. On this occasion, I myself suggested that I should address the Subjects Committee and also the delegates. The Working Committee agreed to this and, although I wanted to address you before the resolution was adopted, the Committee suggested that I do so after the resolution was disposed of.

It was my desire to see the faces of you all, and also to give you an opportunity of looking at me and finding out if there had been any change in me since my retirement in Bombay. Fifty years of public life have given me the capacity to read your faces. I have during these years created many institutions, met thousands and tens of thousands of people. Besides, I have been in contact with the Working Committee and many of you have been in correspondence with me.³ And it should not therefore be difficult for me to get at the back of your minds.⁴ But my desire to see you was in order to find out where I was.

You have, I see, made considerable progress in the art of debate and I congratulate you, for in a democratic organization powers of persuasion and a high level of debate are essential. I have also seen that the number of amendments you move has also increased, and it is well that you should all be anxious to press new points of view,⁵ though I cannot congratulate you on some of the amendments which were either frivolous or absurd.

You have adopted the resolution practically unanimously as there were only seven or eight dissentients.⁶ That adds to my responsibility, for I have been witness to debate. If I had so desired, I should have warned you before voting, but I accepted the suggestion of the Working Committee that I should not address the House before the resolution was passed.

I do not want to reply to what has been said by some of you in the course of the debate. But I do want to say that, though there was a time in my life when I launched movements even if some of my conditions had not been fulfilled, I am now going to be heard, not for the sake of being heard, but because a General who

has to lead the army must let the army know his conditions beforehand.

Let me then tell you that I do not see at the present moment conditions propitious for an immediate launching of the campaign. We are hemmed in with difficulties greater than those we had to face in the past. They are external and internal. The external difficulties are due to the fact that we have declared unmistakably what we want and the Government have also declared their intentions as clearly as possible. Then there is the fact that the British Government are engaged in a world war and, naturally, if we engage them in a fight, we ask for enough trouble. This is the first difficulty.⁷

What, however, appals me is our internal difficulties. I have often said that external difficulties need never frighten a satyagrahi. On the contrary, he flourishes on external difficulties and faces them with redoubled zeal and vigour. Today the situation is almost the reverse. Our external difficulties do not find us stronger and more united. Our internal difficulties are increasing. Our Congress registers are full of bogus members and members who have swelled them because they know that getting into the Congress means getting to power. Those who therefore never before thought of entering the Congress have come into it and corrupted it. And how can we prevent people from coming into a democratic organization because they come from selfish motives? We have not that discipline, and not the strength and purity of public opinion which would compel such people to stay out.

And this strength and purity cannot come so long as we approach the primary members only once in a year for the vote. There is no discipline in our ranks, they have been divided up into groups which strive to gain more and more power. Non-violence as between ourselves does not seem to us to be necessary.⁸ Wherever I go I hear the same complaint. My conception of democracy is not the formation of groups quarrelling with one another to such an extent as would destroy the organization itself. There may be groups, but they should strengthen and not weaken and destroy the organization.

Ours has been both a democratic organization and a fighting one, ever since we reorganized it in 1920.⁹ We have used even military language, though in a non-violent sense. Well, then, I want to repeat what I have said times without number that, if you will be soldiers in my army, understand that there is no room for democracy in that organization. The army may be a part of a democratic organization, but there can be no democracy in it, as there can be none in its ranks, as there is none in our various organizations—A.I.S.A., A.I.V.I.A., and so on. In an army the General's word is law, and his conditions cannot be relaxed.

I am supposed to be your General,¹⁰ but I do not know a more feeble General in history. I have no sanctions.¹¹ My only sanction is the love and affection in which you hold me. But it has its weakness as it has its strength. I know that you love me. Does your love translate itself into action?¹² If it does not, if it does not mean ever-increasing discipline and ever-increasing response to what I say, let me declare to you that I cannot launch civil disobedience, and you must select another General. You cannot make me your General on your terms.¹³ You must

fulfil the conditions set down in the Independence Pledge. You must allow me to tell you that if you do not fulfil those conditions it will not be possible for me to launch a struggle. . . . You cannot compel me to lead you against my will. When you appoint me as your General, you must obey my command. There can be no argument about it. Know, therefore, that I will insist on my conditions. They are inexorable, and if you do not observe them, I will automatically withdraw.

The General of a military army insists on strict discipline. I go on arguing with you, because my only sanction is love. I say to you, therefore, that unless you accept my conditions, unless you have faith in them as you have in me, you should not think of going to jail. If you will go to jail, you have to pay the price.¹⁴ Ours is a civil fight, and imprisonment as a civil prisoner has got to be earned by strict observance of the programme. For thieves and dacoits also fill the jails but they do not carry the country to freedom.

Well, then, I laid down the conditions in 1920 and have never ceased to repeat them. You may not believe in the programme, you may have grown wiser since then, but I have not. My faith in it has increased with the years. I see more virtues in it than I saw before.¹⁵

I turned a rebel against this Government in 1919, but before that I was as loyal to it as any Britisher.¹⁶ It is that unique loyalty that gave me the unique power of civil disobedience, and the unquenchable spirit of search. I therefore go on making my experiments and also go on declaring my mistakes whenever I discover them. I am an erring mortal like you.¹⁷ I have never even in my dream thought that I was a *maha-atma* (great soul) and that others were *alpa-atma* (little souls). We are all equal before our Maker—Hindus, Mussalmans, Parsis, Christians, worshippers of one God. Why then do we fight among ourselves?

We are all brothers—even the Quaid-e-Azam is my brother. I have meant all that I have said about him, never has a frivolous word escaped my lips, and I say that I want to win him over. A speaker said that I would not fight until I had won him over, and he was right.¹⁸ There was a time when there was not a Muslim whose confidence I did not enjoy. Today I have forfeited that confidence and most of the Urdu Press pours abuse on me.¹⁹ But I am not sorry for it. It only confirms me in my belief that there is no swaraj without a settlement with the Mussalmans.

You will perhaps ask, in that case, why I am talking of a fight. I do so in order to have a Constituent Assembly which means agreement and settlement. But if the Mussalmans will have nothing to do with it, I will understand that there is no settlement.²⁰ I am also a reader of the Koran like them, and I will tell them that the Koran makes no distinction between the Hindus and the Mussalmans.²¹ But if they feel that they should have the Heaven without the Hindus, I will not grudge it to them.

I have no ill-will towards Englishmen. When I heard that Lord Zetland was wounded, my heart was wounded. That is my temperament.²² I therefore always work with and for goodwill for them. That I want to destroy British imperialism is another matter, but I want to do so by converting those who are associated with

it.²³ If non-violence has the power that I attribute to it, it is sure to react on the opponent. If it does not, the fault will be mine, not that of non-violence.

You must therefore understand that you have to deal with a dangerous man who will land you in unexpected situations. Compromise is part and parcel of my nature. I will go to the Viceroy fifty times, if I feel like it. I went to Lord Reading whilst non-cooperation was going on.²⁴ I would not only go to the Viceroy when invited, but I would even seek opportunities to go to him, if necessary. You must know that, if I do so, I do it in order to strengthen our cause and not weaken it. It happened so with General Smuts. At the last moment I telephoned to him.²⁵ He put the receiver down in anger, but I thrust myself on him. As a result he relented and I was in a stronger position. Today we are friends. The basis of my fight is love for the opponent.²⁶ I could not have fought the Dutch and the English²⁷ without love in my heart for them, and without a readiness for compromise. But my compromise will never be at the cost of the cause or of the country.

One of the amendments was to the effect that the word 'mass' be inserted before 'civil disobedience'. Well, if it is not mass civil disobedience is it to be the civil disobedience of a handful? In that case I should not have come to you.²⁸ You might perhaps not be taking these things seriously, but in my mind there is no other thought. My mind is wholly concentrated on trying this great experiment with your help and support, because it will not only benefit India but the whole world. It is the thought of mass civil disobedience that keeps my mind awake all the twenty-four hours. Why should a man of 70 trifle with a thing of this kind?

Therefore let me tell you that there is no civil disobedience until I feel that you are ready. You have therefore to purify every Congress Committee and make it a satyagrahi unit. To that extent it will have to cease to be a democracy, because my word will be law. But if it does not become such a unit, millions of our dumb countrymen will be sacrificed. None of my campaigns has crushed or ruined the masses. They have increased their stature, and it is in order to take it still higher that I want to live. There was in the earlier campaigns enough of violence of thought and word, but there was non-violence in act, and therefore the masses were saved. I would not light-heartedly imperil those masses today, and that is why I insist on strictest non-violence and the fulfilment of my conditions. For that is the only link that binds them and me.²⁹ I may have to lay down my life for preserving the power that has accrued to India. You may not be able to analyse that power but it is there. It is the power of ahimsa.

If I am your General, your pulse should be in my hands. Otherwise I cannot fight through you. I can fight single-handed, but for that fight I need not come and argue with you.

One last word before I close. I do not want to stand in the way of those who want to fight at once. But if they have any sense of honour, I should advise them to do so after getting out of the Congress. Let me assure them that, if they put up a non-violent fight and carry it through, I shall follow their lead. Of course it is open to them to remain in the Congress and to defy it, but it will not be satyagraha.³⁰ Those who are impatient today do not know the power of

satyagraha.

The resolution does not bind you. If you do not accept the conditions, you can still say you do not accept them, and you can have the resolution reversed. That will free you and me both. But if you accept the conditions and will all observe them, you may be sure that it need not take me a month to launch the struggle.³¹

¹In October 1934.

²*Congress Bulletin* here has: "I should be allowed to serve the country in my own way with whatever strength is left to me "

³This sentence is from *Congress Bulletin*

⁴*Congress Bulletin* has: "It should, therefore, not be difficult for me to remember you."

⁵*Congress Bulletin* here adds: "So that any point that is not accepted today may be accepted tomorrow."

⁶*Congress Bulletin* here adds: "They had every right to do so."

⁷This sentence is from *Congress Bulletin*.

⁸The following two sentences are from *Congress Bulletin*

⁹*Congress Bulletin* here adds: "Our fight is not yet over "

¹⁰*Congress Bulletin* here adds: "It should not mean that I should keep you in the dark regarding my feelings."

¹¹This sentence is from *Congress Bulletin*.

¹²*Congress Bulletin* here has: "In one way it is a great thing but in another sense it can also be worthless. I can say I cherish love for all in my heart Perhaps you also do so but your love must be active."

¹³The following five sentences are from *Congress Bulletin*.

¹⁴*Congress Bulletin* here has: "For love must be characterized by patience. I have heard friends criticizing the charkha. I know you are all ready to go to jail but you must earn the right and pay the price for going to jail. You will not be going to jail as criminals."

¹⁵*Congress Bulletin* here has: "The more I think about non-violence, the greater the virtues I find in it."

¹⁶*Congress Bulletin* here reports: "I have been an outlaw since 1918. Before that I was so loyal to the Empire that I wrote to Lord Chelmsford that I longed to have the same loyalty towards the Empire as a Britisher has in his heart. I wrote those words because I am a believer in truth. Truth is my God and I could not have written anything else if I wanted to be true to myself."

¹⁷*Congress Bulletin* here has: "You may have other ways than truth and non-violence but mine is the same old path and, being just a human being like you, I also commit mistakes."

¹⁸*Congress Bulletin* here adds: "I would be happy indeed if he could keep me in his pocket."

¹⁹*Congress Bulletin* here reports: "I do not read all that appears in the Urdu Press; but perhaps I get a lot of abuses there."

²⁰*Congress Bulletin* here has: "If Muslims who came to the Constituent Assembly through Muslim votes declare that there is nothing common between Hindus and Muslims, then alone would I give up hope, but even then I would argue with them because they read the Koran and I have also studied something of that holy book."

²¹*Congress Bulletin* here reports: "I will tell them that God makes no distinction between Hindus and Muslims."

²²*Congress Bulletin* here adds: "These are my ways. You may call them weakness. If you want me you must understand this."

²³*Congress Bulletin* here has: "I fight British imperialism but I have no quarrel with those who run the imperialist machine. I do not want to destroy them but I want to bring about a change in them."

²⁴On May 13 and 14, 1921.

²⁵*Congress Bulletin* here adds: "to try and see if the fight could be abandoned."

²⁶This sentence is from *Congress Bulletin*.

²⁷*Congress Bulletin* here adds: "in South Africa".

²⁸The following two sentences are from *Congress Bulletin*.

²⁹The rest of the paragraph is from *Congress Bulletin*.

³⁰*Congress Bulletin* here adds: "which never harms the man who uses the weapon".

³¹*Congress Bulletin* here reports: "You may have other methods, but so far as I am concerned I have only the same old programme. I know that that method has never harmed anyone who has followed it and even now if I can get your whole-hearted support and cooperation, I can show you what can be achieved within even a month."

6. *Speech by Mahatma Gandhi after evening prayer on the Exhibition Grounds at Ramgarh on 18 March 1940*

Addressing the gathering after prayer, Mahatma Gandhi stressed the importance of khadi and said for those who were not regular members of the Congress, an exhibition held on such occasions was a substitute for the Congress. Members of the Congress might attend the Congress session out of a sense of duty but an exhibition provided at least an attraction for those who were not Congressmen. Such men could come and buy something for their use at the exhibition. He said:¹

"This Exhibition is the real Congress for the masses. Our chosen delegates will attend the Congress, and pass resolutions there as to what we have to do during the year. But what are the masses to do? The Exhibition serves to provide intellectual pabulum for the masses, and those who visit the Exhibition owe it to them to take to them what they learn here. There is no institution where 35 crores of our people can go. The Kumbh Mela² is attended by several lakhs of people, but what is that number in a population of 35 crores? But if you who attend the Exhibition can take some of the crafts which are being demonstrated here to the villagers, you can reach the millions who inhabit the villages and revolutionize their lives."

Urging his hearers to buy khadi he said that they would thus be carrying the message of khadi to the remotest corners of the land. He wanted khadi to be associated with everyone and unify the largest gathering in the country. Lakhs of people assembled at the Kumbh Mela or other functions, but khadi, when carried to every village home, would mean the largest congregation representing the urge for truth and nationhood in the immediate present; they would be helping thousands of poor and widowed womanhood who depended for their livelihood on khadi. They would be doing something more. They would in reality be participating in the struggle for swaraj. Swaraj was not to be attained by violence. There was a talk of launching civil disobedience but who would launch civil disobedience and how? When they spun, wore and bought khadi they would demonstrate their determination to stand by truth and peacefulness steadfastly. for khadi symbolized these. If they thought they had to achieve a goal and attain an objective, it was khadi that would show them the way to their goal and carry

them through. By following other methods they would be deviating from the path they had set before themselves and not attain independence. He said:³

“There is the talk of civil disobedience in the air. But who is fit to practise civil disobedience? Not those who will not spin, who will not wear khadi, who do not care for the handicrafts. They will do some other kind of disobedience, but it will be anything but civil. That is not the disobedience I would like to teach or would care to live for. I want to turn the quiet and living strength that spinning gives you into the channel of civil disobedience. If you will, therefore, see the exhibition with my eyes, you will carry the gospel of khadi and the spinning-wheel to the villages, and lay the foundation of a handicraft civilization and universalize khadi and handicrafts. If you do so, I assure you there will be no necessity for civil disobedience. If you will not do so, if you do not spin, do not universalize khadi, I may go to jail and be there for a number of years, but it will be all in vain. Without khadi and without handicrafts the Congress boat, far from carrying us to the port, will sink in midstream.”

¹The following paragraph is from *Harjan*.

²A religious fair held once in twelve years in Allahabad, Hardwar, Ujjain and Nasik

³What follows is from *Harjan*.

7. Mahatma Gandhi in an interview given to Associated Press at Ramgarh on 19 March 1940¹

It was a soul-stirring sight to see people standing knee-deep in water awaiting instructions to disperse. I feel God ranged Himself on the side of the people and gave them a foretaste of the suffering to be voluntarily undergone as the price of freedom.

Every session has its lesson. This has a lesson for workers to choose a site which will be proof against bad weather. Not that the slightest reflection can be cast on those who chose Ramgarh as their site. They have had no reason to fear rain at this time of the year. I feel for Rajen Babu, who, with his band of workers, slaved night and day to make the session a success so far as the arrangements are concerned.

¹According to *The Hitavada*, 21-3-1940, Gandhiji was pacing up and down the verandah of his hut and listening to reports regarding the rain.

8. Speech by Mahatma Gandhi on 20 March 1940 at the Ramgarh Congress Session

I am pleased to have been here to hear all these discussions today. When I see that all those who have spoken had the word ‘civil disobedience’ on their tongue,

I am reminded of the Biblical saying: "Not everyone that sayeth to me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven: but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in Heaven, he shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven." (Cheers.) *I do not need your cheers, I want to win your hearts and your intellects, and cheers and acclamations stand in the way of winning them.*² *It is not those who shout the word civil disobedience that can launch civil disobedience. It is only those who work for civil disobedience that are capable of launching the movement. Real civil disobedience makes it binding on those who join it to do what they are enjoined to do and avoid what is prohibited. Civil disobedience properly launched and conducted is bound to lead to freedom.*

*I feel you are not prepared.*³ *Therefore when I saw you acclaiming the speakers who said that we are ready I was shocked. For I know that we are not ready. It is true that we all know and realize that we are slaves in our own land. We also realize that freedom is essential for us. Further we all realize that we will have to fight for freedom. I may also join you in applauding the speakers who have demanded immediate launching of civil disobedience. A thief has come and turned me out of my house. I will have to fight him and get it back, but before I can do this, I must be prepared. (Applause.) Your claps only demonstrate that you do not understand what this preparation means. Your General finds that you are not ready, that you are not real soldiers and that if we proceed on the lines suggested by you, we are bound to be defeated.*⁴ *And knowing this, how can I ask you to fight? I know that with such as you I can only have defeat.*

*I must make it clear that I am not prepared to do anything for which I will have to repent. I have never acknowledged defeat throughout all these years in any of my struggles. Though some people may point out to Rajkot, I maintain that it was not a defeat for me. Future history alone can make this clear.*⁵ *The word 'defeat' is not to be found in my dictionary, and everyone who is selected as a recruit in my army may be sure that there is no defeat for a satyagrahi.*

*I can assure you and I promise you and publicly announce it, that when you are ready I shall march forth and then I [shall] have no doubt about victory. I said this before the Subjects Committee and I repeat it again here. Purify your mind and heart. Some people here have been asserting that it is not necessary for us to concentrate on the charkha before launching a fight. I do not doubt their sincerity and bravery, but, as Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has told you, they betray certain weakness of mind.*⁶ *Well, I tell you, as I have been telling you these 20 years, that there is a vital connection between satyagraha and the charkha, and the more I find that belief challenged the more I am confirmed in it. Otherwise I am no fool to persist in turning the charkha, day in and day out, at home and even on trains, in the teeth of medical advice. Doctors want me to leave the charkha. But I am devoting greater attention to it, because I have to prepare myself.*⁷ *I want you too to be turning the charkha with the same faith. And unless you do it and unless you habitually use khadi you will deceive me and deceive the world. No one who does not believe in the charkha can be a soldier under me.*

*With me there is no other alternative than non-violence.*⁸ *I shall of course die*

with non-violence on my lips, but you are not wedded to it in the sense I am, and so it is open to you to have another programme and to make our country free. But if you will not do this, nor turn the charkha, and want me to fight, it will be an impossible situation. If you feel that you are to fight, and you must fight now, and immediately, and feel convinced that there is some other method of winning the fight, I would ask you to go ahead and I shall be the first to applaud your victory. But if you do not want to leave me and yet are not prepared to follow my methods and instructions, then I would like to know what kind of generalship is this that you offer me.

Those who clamour for immediate launching of civil disobedience want to have me with them. Why? Because they are conscious that the masses are with me. I unhesitatingly say that I am a people's man. Every moment of my life I feel for the starving millions. I live and am prepared to lay down my life to relieve their sufferings and mitigate their miseries. I claim to have some influence with the millions, because I have been a faithful servant of theirs.⁹ My loyalty to them is greater than any other loyalty, and it is for them that I would not give up the charkha even if you were to forsake me or kill me. For I know that, if I were to relax the condition of the charkha, I should bring ruin upon those dumb millions for whom I have to answer before God. If, therefore, you do not believe in the charkha in the sense I believe in it, I implore you to leave me. Even if you stone me to death I will still work for the masses. This is my way. If you think there is any other way please leave me alone.

Without the charkha I cannot lead you to jail in the course of the fight for freedom. I will not have anyone under me who does not believe in the charkha. I shall go ahead only when I am satisfied that you have faith in the charkha. Remember if we, who are assembled here, blunder [we] shall cause untold suffering to the dumb millions by our mistake. The delegates to the Congress bear a heavy responsibility and as your General my responsibility is still greater. As a General I have to be a sort of beacon-light to you and warn you against possible disaster. Therefore, I have to proceed cautiously.

Many speakers dilated on the evils of British imperialism. I do not wish to elaborate that point except to state that we must get rid of it. I have told you the cue. Before I agree to launch satyagraha I must be convinced that you have understood my remedy.

It is no use going to a doctor and asking for a medicine if you do not propose to take it according to his instructions. I would much rather ask you to seek another doctor for your ailment. All the sermons you have heard today against British imperialism will not help you to remove it. They will only make you angry. This will not solve our problem. Anger is opposed to satyagraha. We have no quarrel with the British people. We want to be their friends and retain their goodwill, not on the basis of their domination, but on the basis of a free and equal India.

As a free country India will bear no malice to anyone, nor attempt to enslave any people. We shall march with the rest of the world, just as we shall desire the rest of the world to march with us. Remember, therefore, that you have to fulfil

both the internal and external conditions. If you fulfil the internal condition, you will cease to hate your opponent, you will not seek or work for his destruction, but pray to God to have mercy on him. Do not, therefore, concentrate on showing the misdeed of the Government, for we have to convert and befriend those who run it. And after all no one is wicked by nature. And if others are wicked, are we the less so? That attitude is inherent in satyagraha, and if you do not subscribe to it, even then I would ask you to leave me. For without a belief in my programme and without an acceptance of my condition you will ruin me, ruin yourselves and ruin the cause.

Satyagraha is the path of truth at all costs. If you are not prepared to follow this path please leave me alone. You can pronounce me worthless and I shall not resent it. If I do not make this clear here and now, I shall be ruined and along with me the country. Truth and ahimsa are the essence of satyagraha, and the charkha is their symbol. Just as the General of any army insists that his soldiers should wear a particular uniform, I as your General must insist on your taking to the charkha which will be your uniform. Without full faith in truth, non-violence and the charkha, you cannot be my soldiers. And I repeat again that if you do not believe in this, you must leave me alone and you can try your own methods.

¹St. Matthew, vii 21

²This sentence is from *Harijan*.

³The following two sentences are from *Harijan*.

⁴The following two sentences are from *Harijan*

⁵This sentence is from *Harijan*.

^{6, 7, 8}The following two sentences are from *Harijan*

⁹The following three sentences are from *Harijan*.

9. Mahatma Gandhi in an interview given to a Ceylonese delegation¹ at Ramgarh on 20 March 1940

Mahatmaji's first words were: "It is an unfortunate thing that is happening to Indians in Ceylon."

We explained to him that the problem was an economic one and that Indians in Ceylon, apart from labourers and a few others, were mainly exploiters. Petty traders and Chettiars have captured the entire import and export trade and many estates from peasants in distress. The people of Lanka only see this side of India. Gandhiji replied: "Yes, that is too true. The fault is on both sides."

We told him that there was no racial animosity against Indians as was made clear by the receptions accorded to Pandit Nehru. Till Poet Tagore and Gandhiji and Mr. Nehru and a few other eminent Indians came to Lanka, our people met only exploiting Chettiars and immigrant Indian labourers. Gandhiji replied: "Unfortunately, we haven't many Nehrus and many men of similar calibre. The wrong people, if sent, might spoil everything."

We asked him what Ceylon could expect from a free India. Many in Lanka

prefer to remain as a Dominion in the British Empire than to be free and run the risk of being exploited by India which could easily swamp Lanka. Gandhiji laughed and said: "Ceylon has nothing to fear from a free India."²

¹This was reported to the United Press. The Ceylonese National Congress delegation consisting of Jayawardhana, S. Jayasekara and Amaratunga met Gandhiji in the afternoon.

²The delegation presented Gandhiji a book entitled *The Work of the Buddha* by a Buddhist Bhikku of Ceylon

10. *Statement issued on the political situation by the Congress Working Committee at its meeting held at Wardha from 17 to 21 June 1940*

The Working Committee have been deeply moved by the tragic events that have taken place in Europe in startling succession and in particular by the misfortunes that have befallen the people of France. These events have already had far-reaching consequences and they are likely to be followed by other happenings which will lead to novel situations and complex problems.

Ever since the commencement of the European War the Congress has followed a policy which was confirmed in the Ramgarh Resolution based on the principles of the Congress, and the attitude of the British Government towards the demand that India should function as a free and independent country. The manner of the application of this policy will necessarily depend on the situation which changes from day to day. Problems which were distant are now near at hand and may soon demand solution. The problem of the defence of the country against possible external aggression and internal disorder has attained urgency and importance.

The war in Europe, resulting from a desire for imperialist domination over other peoples and countries and suicidal race in armaments has led to human sorrow and misery on a scale hitherto unknown. It has demonstrated the inefficacy of organised violence on however vast a scale for the defence of national freedom and the liberties of peoples. It has shown beyond a doubt that warfare cannot lead to peace and freedom, and the choice before the world is uttermost degradation and destruction through warfare or the way of peace and non-violence on a basis of freedom for all peoples. Mahatma Gandhi has presented to the peoples of the world, crying for relief from the crushing burden of war, a weapon in the shape of organised non-violence designed to take the place of war for the defence of a people's rights and freedom against armed aggression. Mahatma Gandhi feels that at this critical phase in the history of the nations the Congress should enforce this ideal by itself declaring that it does not want that India should maintain armed forces to defend her freedom against external aggression or internal disorder.

While the Working Committee holds that the Congress must continue to adhere strictly to the principle of non-violence in its struggle for independence,

the Committee cannot ignore the present imperfections and failings in this respect of the human elements they have to deal with and the possible dangers in a period of transition until the Congress has acquired non-violent control over the people in adequate measure and the people have imbibed sufficiently the lesson of organised non-violence. The Committee have deliberated over the problem that has thus arisen and have come to the settled policy of the Congress beyond assail. It must be admitted that success cannot be claimed for non-violent effort in the case of communal riots. The W.C. are of opinion that the fault must be laid at the door of volunteer organisations. The W.C. hope that at this critical hour in the history of India volunteer organisations would be able effectively to deal with riots and the like in a non-violent manner.

The Working Committee never had occasion to determine whether India can be defended non-violently, nor is it even now called upon to do so, though the proved futility of violence to defend the nations of Europe is sufficient indication for the W.C. for coming to a decision. But till the hour for taking a final decision arrives, the W.C. must keep an open mind. But so far as the present is concerned, the W.C. are jointly of opinion that in pursuance of their non-violent policy Congressmen must not have anything to do with military training activities calculated to make India military-minded. Therefore the W.C. cannot but view with grave alarm the attempt made in an organised manner to prepare India [for war. If India] were free and independent without any army she would have no fear of external aggression. The best defence that free India can put up if the people accepted the Congress policy would be to cultivate friendliness with the whole world. To invest crores of rupees in armaments, fortresses and the like would be to invite foreign attack. The W.C. believe that India is too poor to invest money in costly defence forces and modern equipment. The W.C. therefore warn the British Government against the feverish preparations that they are making for the professed defence of India. They are of opinion that they are intended merely to help Britain. These preparations cannot help India in any real sense. The W.C. draw the attention of the British Government and people that although India is claimed by them to have Provincial Autonomy and every Province has elected assemblies, and there is also a partially popularly elected Central Legislative Assembly, the huge expense is being incurred without any reference to these legislatures. The W.C. believe that it is wrong and immoral to arm one man, however honest and distinguished, with unlimited powers to utilise the resources of a great country like India and to impress her people in any manner he chooses without any control or check on the part of her people. It is a procedure in no way in keeping with the British Government's declarations, however unsatisfactory from the Congress standpoint, about the freedom of India.

The W.C. wish to declare that the Congress claims to be wholly friendly to the British people. But the friendliness and goodwill can have no play and no meaning, so long as India remains in helpless bondage and her resources in men and money are utilised without ascertaining the wishes of the representatives of the people elected under a system established by Great Britain. The W.C. ask the British

Government to revise their suicidal policy and take the popular assemblies into their confidence. The W.C. associate themselves with the appeal recently made by Gandhiji to every Briton and hope that Great Britain will accept the policy of non-violence whose potency has been proved beyond doubt even though its application was admittedly imperfect. British Government may rely upon the fullest and friendliest cooperation of the Congress in the direction of peace effort in the non-violent way commended by Gandhiji.

In spite of the repeated and firm declarations of the Congress to the contrary, there seems to be a belief among the public, including even some Congressmen, that the Congress will be satisfied with Dominion Status. The W.C. warn all concerned that they will accept no status lower than complete independence and that declaration should be made now and given effect to immediately so far as may be. The legal formality may await a suitable future period. Only India free and independent in action can decide upon the part she should play in the present war.

There is talk among some Congressmen that the Congress may countenance resumption of ministerial office. The W.C. wish to make it clear that there is no prospect of the Congress countenancing such a step without a satisfactory settlement with the Government and in no case of promoting a war effort in which they have no faith. In view of the foregoing it is superfluous to say that the W.C. cannot associate themselves with any Government proposals to expand the Central Executive.

In view of the recent developments the W.C. decide to remove the ban upon Congress members of the Central Legislative Assembly attending its sessions.

Inasmuch as it is necessary still further to enforce strict discipline, the W.C. ask all those who do not strictly believe in non-violence to resign from the Congress. It is against the Congress constitution for anyone to become a four-anna member unless he, believing in it, signs the Congress pledge.

11. *Rajagopalachari's draft resolution for the Congress Working Committee meeting at Delhi on 5 July 1940*

The Working Committee is of opinion that the proposals communicated by His Excellency the Viceroy in his conversation with Mahatma Gandhi do not meet the requirements of the present situation in any satisfactory manner.

According to these proposals the claim of the Congress that the status of India should be declared by Britain to be one of complete independence remains unsatisfied. Any declaration that India shall be in the same position as the self-governing countries in the British Commonwealth does not meet the case of India. Nor has it any real meaning in the present state of world affairs.

Apart from this and what is even more important in relation to the immediate activities in regard to defence efforts,—the Working Committee is emphatically

of the opinion that the Congress cannot withdraw its non-cooperation unless the entire field of Central Government including Defence is immediately placed in charge of a National Government, which, though formed *ad hoc* and as a transitory measure, should be so constituted as to command the confidence of all the elected elements of the Central Legislature and of the Responsible Governments in the Provinces. Unless such a Central National Government is immediately formed, any efforts in the direction of the defence of India will not only be contrary to the fundamental principles of justice and democratic government, but will also prove utterly futile.

12. *An incomplete draft resolution (dated 5 July 1940) for the Congress Working Committee*

The W.C. have noted that confusion prevails amongst Congressmen as to the interpretation of their last statement made in Wardha on 21 June. They observe that several newspapers and others in common with many Congressmen have believed that the Committee had given up non-violence as an integral part of the Congress policy. Certain paragraphs of the statement do lend themselves to such interpretations in spite of the following emphatic and unequivocal declaration therein of the Congress party: "The war in Europe . . . national defence."

The W.C. have come to the conclusion that they should individually rely upon Congress volunteers pledged to non-violence and the Congress discipline to deal with internal disorders to the extent it is possible. The volunteers will cooperate in a non-violent way with other similar organizations in their non-violent activities. The W.C. advise all Congress Committees to form volunteer corps provided that they are sure that the candidates know the implications of non-violence and the value of strict discipline.

The Congress non-violence has been hitherto confined to the fight with the British Government. Its success achieved so far has made non-violence to the extent mentioned.

13. *Resolution passed at the Congress Working Committee meeting held at Delhi on 7 July 1940*

POLITICAL SITUATION

The Working Committee have noted the serious happenings which have called forth fresh appeals to bring about a solution of the deadlock in the Indian political situation; and in view of the desirability of clarifying the Congress position they have earnestly examined the whole situation once again in the light of the latest developments in world affairs.

30 July 1946

I think it will be mutually helpful if I adhere to writing the substance of the advice I tendered, on July 26, as a personal friend & friend of the British.

I had made it clear at the outset that I had no representative capacity - & that, after that last resolution of the Working Committee, I could only speak as an individual in any case.

Your first proposal was to advise H.M.G. to let you announce that a status similar to that of the self-governing dominions would be granted to India within one year of the termination of the war, only not to be agreed understanding about British commercial interests, defence, external relations, rights of minorities and the position of princes - in and being laid to treaty obligations with them. Granted these reservations a Constituent Assembly may draw up the Constitution which, unless there were unacceptable provisions, will be adopted by H.M.G. and placed before Parliament for acceptance.

I said as to this, that I personally could never accept it and that so far as I know, the Congress also would never approve of it. My strong advice was that it should not be put before the Council of State or before India. Any such announcement would further embitter the relations between H.M.G. and India. I stressed the point that nothing short of an immediate, unequivocal declaration of independence, free of all control by the British Govt. would

practical experience of non-violence extending over half
a century of ceaseless striving, experiment, research
and judgment. I therefore requested you to present my
proposal to H. M. G. for acceptance as coming from
a lifelong friend and well-wisher of the British people.

You were good enough to tell me that I could find
the purport of our conversation to the members of the
Working Committee. This I propose to do by showing
a copy of this letter to them. Unless you have any
objection. I would like also to make a public appeal
to the British people to accept the non-violent method
at the Supreme Jurisdiction in this life as also the life of

The Working Committee are more than ever convinced that the acknowledgment by Great Britain of the complete independence of India is the only solution of the problems facing both India and Britain and are, therefore, of opinion that such an unequivocal declaration should be immediately made and that as an immediate step in giving effect to it, a provisional National Government should be constituted at the Centre, which, though formed as a transitory measure, should be such as to command the confidence of all the elected elements in the Central Legislature, and secure the closest cooperation of the Responsible Governments in the Provinces.

The Working Committee are of opinion that unless the aforesaid declaration is made, and a National Government accordingly formed at the Centre without delay, all efforts at organising the material and moral resources of the country for defence cannot in any sense be voluntary or as from a free country, and will therefore be ineffective. The Working Committee declare that if these measures are adopted, it will enable the Congress to throw in its full weight in the efforts for the effective organisation of the defence of the country.

14. *Copy of a letter dated 30 July 1940 from Mahatma Gandhi to Lord Linlithgow**

I think it will be mutually helpful if I reduce to writing the substance of the advice I tendered you yesterday as a personal friend and friend of the British.

I had made it clear at the outset that I had no representative capacity and that, after the last resolution of the Working Committee, I could only speak as an individual in any case.

Your first proposal was to advise H.M.G. to let you announce that a status similar to that of the self-governing Dominions would be granted to India within one year of the termination of the war, subject to an agreed understanding about British commercial interests, defence, external relations, rights of minorities and the position of the Princes—regard being had to treaty obligations with them. Granted these reservations, a Constituent Assembly may draw up the Constitution which, unless there were unacceptable provisions, will be adopted by H.M.G. and placed before Parliament for acceptance.

I said as to this that I personally could never accept it and that so far as I know, the Congress also would never approve of it. My strong advice was that it should not be put before the Secretary of State or before India. Any such announcement would further embitter the relations between H.M.G. and India. I stressed the point that nothing short of immediate, unequivocal declaration of independence, free of all control by the British Government, would be accepted by the Congress. (India free will no doubt have to negotiate a treaty, I hope, of partnership, with Great Britain, will have to make provision for protection of legitimate foreign interests, guarantee to the full the rights of the minorities and make adequate

arrangements with the Princes consistently with due protection of the people living within their jurisdiction. All this is inherent in the non-violence policy of the Congress. For, its predominant sanction will be, not the force of arms behind it, but its sense of fairness and absolute justice. In the absence of these two, independence will go as soon as obtained. The thought thus expressed parenthetically was not put before you as part of my advice. I see as I am writing this letter that it was incomplete without it.) The question of drawing of the Constitution by a Constituent Assembly might be postponed to a future suitable date. I suggested too that it would be a catastrophe not to make the aforesaid unequivocal declaration of Independence, for whilst the Congress was openly pledged to it and had been fighting for it persistently and consistently for a long time, all parties, whether it be the Muslim League or the Hindu Mahasabha or even the Princes, could not but prize Independence, if it could be had. Therefore it passed [my] comprehension why there should be so much ado about making the overdue declaration that India was free of all external control.

Your second proposal was that subject to the acceptance of the proposed declaration, and pending the war, you would increase the number of [members of] the Executive Council so as to include representatives of various parties. As to this I advised that without the vital declaration of Independence, the Congress was not likely to serve on the Council. I added that I adhered to the view expressed in a recent *Harijan* article of mine, entitled 'Two Parties'. Unless the parties had one mind on the question of fighting for immediate independence, and the method thereof, no joint effort was possible.

You had also in mind a proposal to convene a miniature Round Table Conference composed of representatives of various parties, groups and interests. I strongly dissuaded you from entertaining any such proposal as being doomed to failure.

I then enlarged upon my confirmed opinion that time had arrived for a revision of Britain's war policy. Frank recognition of German superiority in organisation and technique would be no derogation from British valour and would add to it because of conformity to truth. Even if it were otherwise, and Britain could show her superiority to Germans in every department and defeat them, given sufficient time, my proposition would still hold. In order to prove its validity, admission of German superiority is unnecessary. As you know, I had made this suggestion before the fall of France. My proposition is based purely on humanitarian grounds. I have chosen the present time as being opportune for pressing it. Assuming that Nazis are as bad as they are said to be, victory must be unattainable without copying the Nazi methods. That would mean no deliverance from Nazism. Sufficient has happened to prove the utter futility of armament for the protection of small nations, no matter how brave they are. Britain's victory after the slaughter and ruthlessness which it must involve could never make the world safe for democracy nor bring it peace. Such a victory must mean another preparation for a war more inhuman than the present, as this one had proved more inhuman than the last. For this and similar reasons I urged with

all the earnestness and force at my command that if Britain could accept the non-violent method, it would redound to her eternal glory and would count for much greater bravery than her proverbial bravery in war.

I hoped too that it would not be retorted that I had no warrant for appealing to Britain suddenly to accept the non-violent method when I had failed in persuading my colleagues and co-workers to accept it when the time had come for its enforcement in its fullness. I said in anticipation of the possibility of such a retort that my colleagues and I represent a weak and subject people wholly unarmed and untrained in the use of arms. The non-violence of my conception was essentially for those who were conscious of their ability to wield them with effect. Therefore I suggested that if Britain could be convinced of the superiority of non-violence over violence, now was the psychological moment for the full adoption of the non-violent method. Britain with all her intentions could not protect Abyssinia, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Finland, Norway, Denmark, Holland, Belgium and France. If Britain could accept the method presented by me, it would point to all these countries the way of deliverance and ensure the peace of the world as no other method ever would or could. It would confound Nazi wisdom and put all the Nazi armaments out of use.

Lastly, I said that my proposal was based on practical experience of non-violence extending over half a century of ceaseless striving, experiment, research and prayer. I therefore requested you to present my proposal to H.M.G. for acceptance as coming from a lifelong friend and well-wisher of the British people.

You were good enough to tell me that I could give the purport of our conversation to the members of the Working Committee. This I propose to do by showing a copy of this letter to them. Unless you have any objection, I would like also to make a public appeal to the British people to accept the non-violent method at this supreme juncture in their life as also the life of mankind.

*This letter, dictated by Mahatma Gandhi, but written by hand by Rajendra Prasad, was found among his papers. But we are not certain whether it was posted.

15. *Statement made by the Viceroy on 8 August 1940*

India's anxiety at this moment of critical importance in the world struggle against tyranny and aggression to contribute to the full to the common cause and to the triumph of our common ideals is manifest. She has already made a mighty contribution. She is anxious to make a greater contribution still. His Majesty's Government are deeply concerned that that unity of national purpose in India which would enable her to do so should be achieved at as early a moment as possible. They feel that some further statement of their intentions may help to promote that unity. In that hope they have authorized me to make the present statement.

Last October His Majesty's Government again made it clear that Dominion Status was their objective for India. They added that they were ready to authorize the expansion of the Governor-General's Council to include a certain number of representatives of political parties, and they proposed the establishment of a Consultative Committee. In order to facilitate harmonious cooperation it was obvious that some measure of agreement in the Provinces between the major parties was a desirable prerequisite to their joint collaboration at the Centre. Such agreement was unfortunately not reached, and in the circumstances no progress was then possible.

During the earlier part of this year, I continued my efforts to bring political parties together. In these last few weeks I again entered into conversations with prominent political personages in British India and the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes, the results of which have been reported to His Majesty's Government. His Majesty's Government have seen also the resolutions passed by the Congress Working Committee, the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha.

It is clear that the earlier differences which had prevented the achievement of national unity remain unbridged. Deeply as His Majesty's Government regret this, they do not feel that they should any longer, because of these differences, postpone the expansion of the Governor-General's Council, and the establishment of a body which will more closely associate Indian public opinion with the conduct of the war by the Central Government. They have authorized me accordingly to invite a certain number of representative Indians to join my Executive Council. They have authorized me further to establish a War Advisory Council, which would meet at regular intervals, and which would contain representatives of the Indian States, and of other interests in the national life of India as a whole.

The conversations which have taken place, and the resolutions of the bodies which I have just mentioned, make it clear however that there is still in certain quarters doubt as to the intentions of His Majesty's Government for the constitutional future of India, and that there is doubt, too, as to whether the position of minorities, whether political or religious, is sufficiently safeguarded in relation to any constitutional change by the assurance already given. There are two main points that have emerged. On those two points His Majesty's Government now desire me to make their position clear.

The first is as to the position of minorities in relation to any future constitutional scheme. It has already been made clear that my declaration of last October does not exclude examination of any part either of the Act of 1935 or of the policy and plans on which it is based. His Majesty's Government's concern that full weight should be given to the views of the minorities in any revision has also been brought out. That remains the position of His Majesty's Government. It goes without saying that they could not contemplate the transfer of their present responsibilities for the peace and welfare of India to any system of Government whose authority is directly denied by large and powerful elements in

India's national life. Nor could they be parties to the coercion of such elements into submission to such a government.

The second point of general interest is the machinery for building within the British Commonwealth of Nations a new constitutional scheme when the time comes. There has been very strong insistence that the framing of that scheme should be primarily the responsibility of Indians themselves, and should originate from Indian conceptions of the social, economic and political structure of Indian life. His Majesty's Government are in sympathy with that desire, and wish to see it given the fullest practical expression subject to the due fulfilment of the obligations which Great Britain's long connection with India has imposed upon her and for which His Majesty's Government cannot divest themselves of responsibility. It is clear that a moment when the Commonwealth is engaged in a struggle for existence is not one in which fundamental constitutional issues can be decisively resolved. But His Majesty's Government authorize me to declare that they will most readily assent to the setting up after the conclusion of the war with the least possible delay of a body representative of the principal elements in India's national life in order to devise the framework of the new constitution and they will lend every aid in their power to hasten decisions on all relevant matters to the utmost degree. Meanwhile they will welcome and promote in any way possible every sincere and practical step that may be taken by representative Indians themselves to reach a basis of friendly agreement, firstly on the form which the post-war representative body should take, and the methods by which it should arrive at its conclusions and, secondly, upon the principles and outlines of the constitution itself. They trust, however, that for the period of the war (with the Central Government reconstituted and strengthened in the manner I have described and with the help of the War Advisory Council) all parties, communities and interests will combine and cooperate in making a notable Indian contribution to the victory of the world cause which is at stake. Moreover they hope that in this process new bonds of union and understanding will emerge and thus pave the way towards the attainment by India of that free and equal partnership in the British Commonwealth which remains the proclaimed and accepted goal of the Imperial Crown and of the British Parliament.

16. *Resolution passed at a meeting of the Congress Working Committee held at Wardha on 21 August 1940*

The Working Committee have read the statement issued by the Viceroy on the authority of the British Government on the 8th of August and the report of the speech of the Secretary of State for India in the House of Commons explaining the Viceroy's statement. They note with deep regret that the British Government have rejected the friendly offer and practical suggestion contained in the Poona resolution of the A.I.C.C. on 28th July framed for a solution of the deadlock and

to enable the Indian National Congress to withdraw its non-cooperation and to secure in the present crisis the patriotic cooperation of all the people of India in the governance of India and organization of national defence.

The Working Committee have read with deep pain and indignation the declaration and assumptions contained in the statements and speeches made on behalf of the British Government which seek to deny India her natural right of complete national freedom and reiterate the untenable claim that Britain should maintain herself in a dominant position in India in the discharge of the higher functions of the State. These claims render false and empty even their own promise to recognize India, at an early date, as a free and equal unit in the British Commonwealth. Such claims and recent events and developments in the world have confirmed the Committee's conviction that India cannot function within the orbit of an imperial power and must attain the status of a free and independent nation. This does not prevent close association with other countries within a comity of free nations for the peace of the world.

The Working Committee are of opinion that the assertion contained in the statements made on behalf of the British Government that they will not part with power and responsibility in favour of the elected representatives of the people of India, and that therefore the present autocratic and irresponsible system of government must continue so long as any group of people or the Princes, as distinguished from the people of the States or perhaps even foreign vested interests raise objections to any constitution framed by the elected representatives of the people of India, is a direct encouragement and incitement to civil discord and strife, and amounts to a fatal blow to all willingness to compromise and adjustment of claims.

The Committee regret that although the Congress has never thought in terms of coercing any minority, much less of asking the British Government to do so, the demand for a settlement of the constitution through a Constituent Assembly of duly elected representatives has been misrepresented as coercion and the issue of minorities has been made into an insuperable barrier to India's progress. The Congress has proposed that minority rights should be amply protected by agreement with elected representatives of the minorities concerned. The Working Committee therefore cannot but conclude that the attitude and assertions contained in these statements made on behalf of the British Government confirm the prevailing feeling that the British authority has been continually operating so as to create, maintain and aggravate differences in India's national life.

The Working Committee note with astonishment that the demand for the constitution of provisional National Government composed of persons commanding the confidence of the various elected groups in the present Central Legislature, formed under the 1919 Constitution of India, has been described by the Secretary of State for India as one that would raise the unsolved constitutional issue and prejudge it in favour of the majority and against the minorities. The Working Committee are of opinion that the rejection of this

proposal unmistakably indicates that there is no willingness on the part of the British Government to part with any power and authority even for the immediate purpose of securing cooperation in war efforts. The British Government would gather together and carry on with such dissentient groups and individuals as oppose the wishes of the majority of the people of India and without any coordination with elected legislatures at the Centre or in the Provinces, rather than concede anything that would work towards the recognition of the rights of the people of India to rule themselves democratically.

For these reasons the Working Committee have come to the conclusion that statements referred to are wholly opposed not only to the principle of democracy as acclaimed by the British Government in the War, but also to the best interests of India, and they cannot be a party to accepting the proposals contained in the statements, or advising the country to accept them. The Working Committee consider that these declarations and offers not only fall far short of the Congress demand but would be impediments to the evolution of a free and united India.

The Working Committee call upon the people to condemn the attitude adopted by the British Government by means of public meetings and otherwise, as also through their elected representatives in the provincial legislatures.

17. *Resolution passed by the All India Congress Committee at its meeting held at Bombay on 16 September 1940*

The All India Congress Committee has given its careful attention to the events that have taken place since its last meeting held in Poona on July 27, 1940, and to the resolution passed by the Working Committee at Wardha in August last. The Committee approves of and endorses these resolutions.

In order to end the deadlock in India and to promote the national cause, in cooperation with the British people, the Working Committee, even at the sacrifice of Mahatma Gandhi's cooperation, made a proposal to the British Government in their Delhi resolution of July 7, 1940, which was subsequently approved by the A.I.C.C. at Poona. This proposal was rejected by the British Government in a manner which left no doubt that they had no intention to recognize India's independence, and would, if they could, continue to hold this country indefinitely in bondage for British exploitation. This decision of the British Government shows that they will impose their will upon India, and their recent policy has further shown that they will not even tolerate free expression of public opinion in condemnation of their associating India in the war against Germany, against the will of the vast body of the people of India, and of exploiting her national resources and manpower for this purpose.

The All India Congress Committee cannot submit to a policy which is a denial of India's natural right to freedom, which suppresses the free expression of public opinion, and which would lead to the degradation of her people and their

continued enslavement. By following this policy the British Government have created an intolerable situation and are imposing upon the Congress a struggle for the preservation of the honour and the elementary rights of the people.

The Congress is pledged under Gandhiji's leadership to non-violence for the vindication of India's freedom. At this grave crisis in the movement for national freedom, the All India Congress Committee therefore requests him to guide the Congress in the action that should be taken. The Delhi resolution, confirmed by the A.I.C.C. at Poona which prevented him from so doing, no longer applies. It has lapsed.

The A.I.C.C. sympathise with the British people as well as the peoples of all other countries involved in the war. Congressmen cannot withhold their admiration for the bravery and endurance shown by the British nation in the face of danger and peril. They can have no ill-will against them, and the spirit of Satyagraha forbids the Congress from doing anything with a view to embarrass them. But this self-imposed restraint cannot be taken to the extent of self-extinction. The Congress must insist on the fullest freedom to pursue its policy based on non-violence. The Congress has, however, no desire at the present moment to extend non-violent resistance, should this become necessary, beyond what is required for the preservation of the liberties of the people.

In view of certain misapprehensions that have arisen in regard to the Congress policy of non-violence, the A.I.C.C. desires to state this afresh, and make it clear that this policy continues, notwithstanding anything contained in previous resolutions which may have led to these misapprehensions. This Committee firmly believes in the policy and practice of non-violence not only in the struggle for Swaraj, but also insofar as this may be possible of application in a free India. The Committee is convinced, and recent world events have demonstrated, that complete world disarmament is necessary, and the establishment of a new and juster political and economic order, if the world is not to destroy itself and revert to barbarism. A free India will, therefore, throw all her weight in favour of world disarmament and should herself be prepared to give a lead in this to the world. Such lead will inevitably depend on external factors and internal conditions, but the state would do its utmost to give effect to this policy of disarmament. Effective disarmament, and the establishment of world peace by the ending of national wars, depend ultimately on the removal of the causes of wars and national conflicts. These causes must be rooted out by the ending of the domination of one country over another and the exploitation of one people or group by another.

To that end India will peacefully labour, and it is with this objective in view that the people of India desire to attain the status of a free and independent nation. Such freedom will be the prelude to the close association with other countries within a comity of free nations for the peace and progress of the world.

18. *Correspondence between Dr. Rajendra Prasad and Shantikumar Narottam Morarjee, Walchand Hirachand, and Gaganvihari Mehta of the Scindia Steam Navigation Company concerning the foundation ceremony of its shipbuilding yard at Vizagapatam and a speech delivered there by Dr. Rajendra Prasad on 21 June 1941*

(Copy of a letter from Shantikumar Narottam Morarjee
to Dr. Rajendra Prasad)

Scindia House
Dougall Road, Ballard Estate
Bombay
Camp: 644 Merchant St.
Rangoon
17th April 1941

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I have already requested you, when I spoke to you at the station in Bombay on the 9th instant, to be good enough to accept our invitation and lay the Foundation Stone of the Shipbuilding Yard of the Scindia Company. I have now great pleasure in repeating that invitation on behalf of the Chairman and the Directors of the Scindia Company and we shall all feel grateful to you if you will grace that occasion by your presence and lay the Foundation Stone of the Indian Shipbuilding Yard where the first Indian ship will be built and launched under the auspices of a National Company.

As the auspicious days for laying the Foundation Stone are the 16th and the 21st of June, it is proposed that the gathering for that purpose be fixed for the 21st of June and I hope that day will be convenient to you. In case, however, the 21st of June is not convenient to you, the gathering can be held on the 16th of June. I shall send down my representative to the place where you may be staying at that time to accompany you to Vizagapatam and to look after all your comforts on the way. It will be necessary for you to come down to Vizagapatam a day prior to the day on which the Foundation ceremony is to take place. I shall thank you to let me know which date will be convenient to you, to enable me to make the necessary arrangements. I shall be obliged if you will not hesitate in any way in bringing with you all those who may be able to look after your comforts and also such friends as you like.

This will be the first Shipbuilding Yard started in India under the ownership and control of Indians and it will be the first Shipbuilding Yard where modern ships of about 8,000 to 12,000 tons can be built. I hope you will, therefore, agree with me that it is a very important occasion in the industrial life of our country and that is the greater reason why we have to request you, a distinguished national leader of eminence in our country, to bless the occasion and the project with your good wishes for its success.

I send you herewith a copy of the pamphlet issued at the time of the opening of the Scindia House and have no doubt it will give you an idea of the activities of this national concern. As soon as the speech of the Chairman of the Company welcoming you on that occasion and requesting you to lay the Foundation Stone is ready, I shall forward it to you.

I need not assure you that I shall take full care to see that no undue strain is placed on you by your undertaking to lay the Foundation Stone of the Shipbuilding Yard and shall see that you are made quite comfortable from the time you leave your place till you return there after giving your blessings to this new national enterprise.

Again requesting you to be good enough to grace the occasion by your presence and by accepting the invitation on behalf of the Chairman and the Board of Directors of the Scindia Company as well as on behalf of its Managing Agents.

With pranams,

I remain,
Yours sincerely,
Shantikumar N. Morarjee

Babu Rajendra Prasad.

Enclosure not included.

(Copy of a letter from Dr. Rajendra Prasad to Shantikumar Narottam Morarjee)

Sadaquat Ashram
Patna
17 May 1941

My dear Shri Shantikumarji,

I wrote to you from Wardha in reply to your letter asking me to agree to lay the foundation stone of the Shipbuilding Yard of the Scindia Company at Vizagapatam. I hope you might have received the letter. Please let me know definitely if you require me and the date which you have finally fixed so that I may make my programme to suit it. If it is addressed at Sadaquat Ashram, P.O. Dighaghat, Distt. Patna, it will reach me. I had to come away in a hurry on account of Hindu-Muslim riots here. I have been busy since my return trying to restore peace and have been moving about in the affected area. As reports are coming of tension in other places also, I am going to visit them. But Sadaquat Ashram will be my headquarters and expect a reply soon.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

(Copy of a letter from Shantikumar Narottam Morarjee to Dr. Rajendra Prasad)

Scindia House
Dougall Road, Ballard Estate
Bombay
19th May 1941

My dear Babu Rajendra Prasadji,

I am grateful to you for your letter of the 1st instant and 17th instant. I am extremely sorry I could not reply to your letter of the 1st earlier as I was waiting to write after getting the invitation cards printed. The printer, as usual, has been promising to give me the same 'within' the next day and thus there have arisen a delay in my writing to you.

I confirm the telegram that I sent to you today reading as under:

TWENTYFIRST JUNE DEFINITELY FIXED RADIO AND PRESS ALREADY
ANNOUNCED SAME WRITING

The United Press has already sent out messages and the Press throughout India has published the same. The All India Radio has announced the same in the news items.

The 21st June has been selected as in Vizag there will hardly be any rain during that time and if at all there is any, it will only be a short shower so that the place will cool down. Vizag district has very little rain during the year.

As I have already assured in my previous letter, every effort will be taken to make your journey and stay comfortable and to avoid any strain to your health.

I am sending herewith a copy of the invitation card which has been ready only today. In a couple of days I shall be sending you a few more invitation cards so that you may send to any friend whom you might like to invite for the occasion.

The speech of the Chairman welcoming you will be ready shortly and I shall be sending the same to you. We are intending to have a special number in different papers in the various Provinces and if you want to suggest any particular paper, I shall be glad to include same in the list.

With pranams,

I am,
Yours sincerely,
Shantikumar N. Morarjee

Babu Rajendra Prasadji
Sadaquat Ashram, Dighaghat
Dt. Patna.

(Copy of a letter from Shantikumar Narottam Morarjee to Dr. Rajendra Prasad)

Scindia House
Dougall Road, Ballard Estate
Bombay
26th May 1941

My dear Shri Rajen Babu,

I am grateful for your postcard of the 23rd inst. from Patna. You state therein that you are fixing your programme to reach Vizagapatam at the latest in the forenoon of the 21st June. As however requested in my first letter it is necessary that you should arrive in Vizagapatam latest by the 20th June as the ceremony of actually laying the foundation stone is at 10 a.m. on the 21st June, though the public function is arranged at 5.30 in the afternoon.

We have to divide the function in two parts as the Muhurta for the ceremony is at 10 a.m. and that part of the function will be more or less a private function. As that hour may be inconvenient to the public on account of heat etc., the public function will be held at 5.30 p.m. You will please therefore make it convenient to arrive in Vizagapatam latest by the 20th June.

I am glad to note that you are likely to come to Vizagapatam directly from Wardha. Mahadevbhai has promised to come if you also are coming from Wardha.

I have wired my friend Shri Hiralal, son of Rai Bahadur Radhakrishna Jhalan, to arrange with a photographer to take your photograph and send it on to us to enable us to utilise it for preparation of a block. I shall, therefore, thank you to give a sitting to the photographer when he calls on you.

I am sending twenty-five invitation cards by book-post to you and you can send them to any of your friends as you choose.

I have invited as many Congress friends as happen to be out of jail.

Kindly let me know by return that it will be convenient for you to be in Vizagapatam latest by the 20th June.

With pranams,

Yours sincerely,
Shantikumar N. Morarjee

Dr. Shri Rajendra Prasad
Patna.

(Copy of a letter from Dr. Rajendra Prasad to Gaganvihari L. Mehta)

Sadaquat Ashram
Patna
29 May 1941

My dear Shri Gaganvihari,

My programme is still uncertain except that somehow or other I shall manage to visit Vizagapatam in time for the function. I am at Patna till the 7th June after which I propose to go to Wardha. But I am not sure about that. If I go to Wardha, then it is likely that I shall be going to Vizagapatam from there, otherwise I will go from here. I shall be able to let you know my exact programme after the 7th. You need not worry about me. I shall somehow manage to reach the destination. Of course it would be a pleasure to have your company on the way. I shall inform you in time so that you may not be disturbed in your programme.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

Sj. Gaganvihari L. Mehta
Central Bank Buildings
100 Clive Street
Calcutta.

(Copy of a letter from Shantikumar Narottam Morarjee to Dr. Rajendra Prasad)

Scindia House
Dougall Road, Ballard Estate
Bombay
16th June 1941

My dear Babu Rajendra Prasadji,

I am grateful to you for your letter of the 13th June, which reached me with the two advance copies of your speech, only today at about 12.30 p.m. Your letter stating some corrections was however received on Sunday. Because the speech did not reach me earlier I had to telephone and telegraph you and write letters and I am sorry to have given you trouble on this account.

I have already arranged tourist bogies and most of the Directors of the Company will be travelling by the train, which you will be catching at Wardha. I have made arrangements for your, Acharya Kripalani's, and Mathurababu's accommodation in this bogie. There will not be any necessity to change at Raipur by travelling in this bogie. I have made necessary booking for your typist and servant.

I am deputing one of Scindia's officers, Shri M.L. Seth, to go to Wardha a day earlier so as to look after your requirements from Wardha to Vizag.

The Scindia Co. will be greatly honoured if Mrs. Rajendra Prasad and your sister definitely decide to come. I shall see that any orthodox arrangements which may be required will be made. Mrs. Walchand, my wife and sister and 3 other ladies are coming. So you will kindly wire them to start.

I am leaving for Vizag today and have already got in touch with my Vizag office to fix all the programmes mentioned in your letter.

With pranams,

Yours sincerely,
Shantikumar

Babu Shri Rajendra Prasad
Sewagram, Wardha.

P.S. I am enclosing a copy of the telegram sent by me to my Vizag office, to fix up your programme

Shantikumar

Enclosure not included

(Speech by Dr. Rajendra Prasad at the foundation ceremony of the shipbuilding yard of the Scindia Steam Navigation Company at Vizagapatam on 21 June 1941)

Seth Walchand Hirachand, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Let me thank you for the honour you have done me by giving me an opportunity to be associated with this function which is held for laying the foundation stone of a shipbuilding yard in India. The beginning that is going to be made today anew of shipbuilding has, despite all indications to the contrary that one can discern today, a great future and is going, God willing, to revive and re-establish once again the reputation of India as a great maritime country as of old. Today we have an insignificant share even in the coastal trade of our own country and none at all in the vast overseas trade which is all carried in ships owned by foreign countries, especially Great Britain. But that was not so only a little over 100 years ago. It is not surprising that India which has a coastline of something like 4,500 miles is favoured by nature so richly with all kinds of natural resources and has an enterprising population should have developed shipping from the earliest times on a large scale. The wonder is that today she is so poor in shipping that she is not able nor permitted to carry her own trade in her own ships. That she has been a great maritime country and has had not only a

large overseas trade and large and extensive colonies in far off lands beyond the seas but also possessed the materials and the skill to build her own ships which were able to compete even with British built ships till about the second quarter of the 19th century is a fact which has been proved by historical records of unimpeachable authenticity. That she can do so once again, if only she is permitted the facilities available to similar enterprise in other countries, can be demonstrated by reference to the history of the Scindia Steam Navigation Company which has fought and struggled and has succeeded in acquiring for itself a place in the shipping world in the face of unfair competition of vested interests with limitless resources aided and assisted by their own Home Government and in spite of the indifference, if not hostility, of the government in India. It will not be unprofitable to take a bird's eye view of Indian shipping in the pre-British and British times and also to compare the present position of Indian shipping with that of other countries, particularly Great Britain, to enable a correct appreciation of the trials and difficulties which the present enterprise may have to face and the great hope of the future which it inspires.

Till the discovery of America, India was geographically the centre of the civilised world then known to Europe. She had extensive coastline and was thus not unnaturally a great centre for the exchange of goods between Egypt and Greece at the one end and China at the other end. It has been accepted almost universally that India had connection with the Persian Gulf from the very earliest times by sea route. By the seventh century before Christ, shipping had attained great importance in India. Ships used to come and go from Bharu Kutch (modern Broach) and Suraparak (Sopara in Konkan) to Babul on the one side and to Singhal (Ceylon) and Swarna Bhoomi (Burmah) on the other. There are instances mentioned of as many as five hundred or seven hundred traders being carried in a single ship. There is mention also of a Shreni (Union) of Jalniyamak (pilots). By the time of the Mauryan Empire shipping had further developed and out of the six departments of defence one was a department of Navy. Rules were laid down for realising taxes at ports. Asoka is said to have stopped piracy in the Eastern Seas. His son Mahendra started in a ship for Ceylon from what is still known as Mahendraghat at Patna and the enterprising men of Champa (modern Bhagalpur) not only carried the Indian flag but also established a colony of that name in a far off land beyond the seas.

A glorious period of Indian shipping and colonisation was between 200 B.C. and A.D. 200. It was during this period that the islands between India and China including Sumatra and Java were practically all colonised.

The Satavahanas and the Tamil kings had large fleets. They established ports and harbours. On the coins of the Satavahana king Yagya Shri Satkarnis there used to be a picture of a ship with two masts which proclaimed his sea power. In some of the Smritis which were compiled about this period a separate rate of interest is mentioned for sea going people—the rate being higher on account of the hazards of the sea; regular rules are laid for loans for foreign countries, and shipping freight is included in the heads for civil claims. Trade connections with

the West were continued and Indian ships went as far as Europe.

In the following period (A.D. 240-540) which is the period of the Vakatah and Gupta Empires, Indian colonists reached as far east as Borneo and trade relations with China on the east and Rome on the west continued as before. Indian ships used to carry travellers also and Fahian, the celebrated Chinese traveller, returned to China in a ship owned by an Indian named Nandi.

In the 8th century the Shailendra kings of Shri Vijay, the capital of Sumatra, built the famous stupa of Borobodur. There are many sculptural scenes of Indian ships in that stupa. Interesting descriptions of Indian colonies and the naval power, particularly of Shri Vijay, are available. Early in the 11th century Rajendra Chola, the King of Tanjore, led a naval expedition and conquered Burmah and Shri Vijay. Raja Bhoj in his book named *Yukti Kalpataru* written in this period has given details of shipbuilding and mentioned the quality of timber which should be used in shipbuilding. It is interesting to note the suggestion that iron should not be used for joining planks in a ship as there was risk of magnetic rocks attracting the ships and thus causing shipwreck.

It seems not improbable that Indian colonisation went as far as the shore of Central and South America through the islands in the Southern Pacific. Thus greater India was established and continued to flourish with great naval strength till about the last quarter of the 15th century when the empire of Bilvatikta came to an end. About this time European Powers gradually established themselves on the sea. They started as pirates and gradually built up their empires. The Moghul Emperors and the Marathas were not without their navies and the name of Angre is well-known.

It is thus that from about 700 B.C. to A.D. 1200, that is, for a period of nearly two thousand years India had an all-round development in shipping, foreign trade and colonisation. Indian seamen proved themselves successful and courageous navigators and are able even today to hold their own in all spheres where they have been given an opportunity.

In the matter of shipbuilding Indians have proved that right up to 1840 they were able to build ships which were stronger and more durable than English ships and were produced much cheaper. A vessel named *Daria Daulat* which was built at Bhavnagar in 1750 was found to be quite sound after 87 years' service in 1837 when every ship in the Navy of Great Britain had to be renewed every twelve years. The greatness and superiority of Indian shipbuilding were recognised by Great Britain and for over 100 years many wooden vessels were built for the British navy in Bombay.

From its early days the East India Company maintained a shipbuilding yard at Surat until 1735 when most of the work was transferred to Bombay and the establishment greatly enlarged. Lauji Nasarwanji was the talented foreman of the Surat Shipyard and he followed the establishment to Bombay and laid the foundation of the fortunes of that family of shipbuilders whose fame spread to England and who were entrusted with the building of many ships. Bombay thus could boast of a dry dock which, in the words of a visitor in 1775, "is, perhaps, not

to be seen in any part of Europe, either for size or convenient situation". Bombay became in the words of Lt. Col. A. Walker in 1811 a "grand arsenal in India". To quote again Lt. Col. Walker, who wrote in 1811:

It is calculated that every ship in the Navy of Great Britain is renewed every twelve years. It is well known that teak wood built ships last fifty years upwards. Many ships Bombay built after running 14 or 15 years have been brought into the Navy and were considered as strong as ever. The *Sir Edward Hughes* performed eight voyages as an Indiaman before she was purchased for the Navy. No Europe-built Indiaman is capable of going more than six voyages with safety.

"Ships built at Bombay", observes Lt. Col. Walker, "also are executed by one-fourth cheaper than in the docks of England, so that the English-built ships requiring to be renewed every twelve years, the expense is quadruple." But Bombay was not the only place where ships were built. The districts of Sylhet, Chittagong and Dacca had their share also. Calcutta was another centre and many ships were built on the Hooghly whose number within the first twenty years of the nineteenth century came to 241, with a tonnage of 1,07,912 at a cost of nearly 2 crores. Lord Wellesly said in the year 1801 that Calcutta would always be able to furnish tonnage to whatever extent required for carrying to the port of London the trade of private British merchants of Bengal. Another testimony is given by a Frenchman, F. Baltazar Solvyns, in 1811, in his *Les Hindous*. He says, "In ancient times the Indians excelled in the art of constructing vessels and the present Hindus can in this respect still offer models to Europe— so much so that the English, attentive to everything which relates to naval architecture, have borrowed from the Hindus many improvements which they have adapted with success to their own shipping. . . . The Indian vessels unite elegance and utility and are models of patience and fine workmanship."

Indian shipbuilding was then able to hold its own till about the year 1840. A revolution in the technique of ship construction and ship-propulsion took place on account of the use of steam power and the use of iron plates in place of timber. Independent countries introduced the necessary changes and were able to build up their own marine. But India had to go to the wall in the interest of British shipping. Taylor says that "The arrival in the port of London of Indian produce in Indian built ships created a sensation among the monopolies which could not be exceeded if a hostile fleet had appeared in the Thames. Shipbuilders of the port of London took the lead in raising the cry of alarm. They declared that their business was in danger and the families of all shipwrights in England were certain to be reduced to starvation." A Committee was appointed by the Court Directors to investigate the petition of the British shipbuilders. The evidence collected by this Committee shows that Indian ships were better than any ships built in England, lasted very much longer, were cheaper in construction and required less repair. The result was a recommendation that no Indian built ship was to be

accepted on the English Register and this is how shipbuilding in India came to an end. It was not so much only on account of the use of political power and hostility of the rulers that Indian shipping and Indian shipbuilding have had to disappear and are not able to make any headway even up till now.

As I have already said, India has a coastline of 4,500 miles and about 70 lac tons of cargo are carried annually in the coastal trade of India. Over 15 lacs of passengers are carried on the West Coast of India and about 5 lacs between India and Burmah. As regards the overseas trade about 2 crore and 50 lac tons of cargo and two lacs of passengers are carried every year in that trade. The annual value of the overseas import and export trade comes to about 400 crores of rupees. Of this vast trade the share of Indian shipping is practically negligible. Of the large coastal trade Indian shipping companies have a share of only about 25 per cent and of the overseas trade none whatsoever—either in the movement of cargo or in the carriage of passengers. While India possesses tonnage of less than 132,000 tons the tonnage of England exceeds 17 million 891 thousand tons.

India is not wanting in enterprise. Between 1860 and 1925 no less than 108 navigation companies with a total nominal capital of about 46 crores of rupees were registered in India. Many of them were driven out as a result of the hostility of British shipping interests with a loss of actual capital amounting to about 8 crores of rupees. Shipping companies which have gone into liquidation for the same reason from 1904 to 1927 number 24. In the words of Sir Alfred Watson in his evidence before the Joint Select Committee, "Indian company after Indian company which endeavoured to develop a coastal service have been financially shattered by the heavy competition of the British interests. The history of the Scindia Steam Navigation Company shows how mercilessly it has been assailed from time to time by the British shipping interests. The company was registered in 1919 and it started operations in Burmese waters in 1921. British shipping interests started their rate war. The original rate of Rs. 18 was brought down to Rs. 5 per ton. Mr. Narottam Morarjee whose name will always be remembered as one of the pioneers in the line and founders of the Scindia met the situation thus created by starting a trading concern for diverting the trade. This led to a realisation of the growing strength of the Indian Company and negotiations were started. Lord Inchape wanted to buy up this Indian Company but thanks to the patriotism and nationalism of the company, he failed and ultimately an agreement was made in 1923 for a period of ten years with many restrictions and limitations. The rate war ceased and agreed rates began to be quoted. Regular services from all ports from Burmah to India, and from Bombay, Karachi and Calcutta to the coast ports were established. This agreement came to an end in 1933 and strenuous efforts to secure a just and reasonable advance in the revision of the agreement did not succeed and the company had once again to sign an agreement with serious limitations and restrictions on its activities and expansion. Other Indian companies have not fared any better. The B.I.S.N. Company has always been jealous of even small Indian shipping companies and has never missed an opportunity to wipe them out of existence whenever an

opportunity has arisen. One instance may be mentioned. An Indian company was started by patriotic Muslims in East Bengal for carrying passengers between Chittagong and Burmah. A serious rate war was started and the passage fare was brought down from Rs.16 to Rs.4 per head. The company lost all its paid up capital and the company was going to be forced to sell itself to the B.I.S.N., but it was ultimately saved by an agreement with the Scindia Company which was brought about between Abdul Bari Choudhry and Mr. Walchand. Four small steamship companies on the West Coast were in similar predicament on account of the attitude of the B.I.S.N. and were saved by a reference of the dispute to arbitration.

Indian public opinion has demanded for a long time an encouragement of Indian shipping for providing a new career for our youth and for securing for the country some of the profits of the carrying trade. Besides, in all maritime countries a mercantile marine is regarded as a second line of defence and the demand for Indian shipping is based on this consideration also, so that it may form the nucleus of an Indian Navy for protecting and defending her people both on the sea and the shore. The Mercantile Marine Committee in their Report (1923-24) said, "The Hon'ble Member for Commerce stated in the Legislative Assembly on behalf of the Government that the desire on the part of the people for their own mercantile marine was a very natural desire. Recognising this natural desire we are of opinion that this should be met within a reasonable period of time and not in the distant future. This being so, it is our considered opinion that the provision of facilities for training Indian officers and engineers alone is not sufficient to meet the requirements of the case and that some further steps are required to achieve the object in view. These further steps we recommend should be in the form of the eventual reservation of the Indian coastal trade for ships the ownership and the controlling interests of which are predominantly Indian." Nearly 18 years have elapsed since then and nothing has been done by the Government for the reservation of the Indian coastal trade for Indian shipping whose share now is only about 25 per cent. On the other hand the attitude which the Government of India has adopted has been one of step-motherly treatment. In the opinion of Sir Charles Innis, the Commerce Member of the Government of India, other countries had thought it necessary to reserve the coastal trade because in times of war they might want their own mercantile marine to feed their people and because they wanted that marine as a second line to their own navy. India did not need this reservation because, forsooth, her shares were protected by the British Navy which could also protect her communication and her trade. Indian public opinion was insistent and could not be satisfied by the doctrine enunciated by Sir Charles Innis and a Bill for reserving the coastal trade was introduced in the legislature and its principle was accepted by it in 1928. This was side-tracked by the enunciation of a new doctrine for the settlement of Indian shipping problem by finding a solution in a spirit of cooperation and goodwill and Sir George Rainy, the then Commerce Member, gave an assurance "that in case an agreed settlement was impossible a situation

would be created which the Government could not ignore and it would be necessary to explore fully the question by what means the obstacle in the way of the development of Indian shipping could be removed." In 1930 a shipping conference was convened but no agreement could be reached and the Government of India issued a communique assuring the public that it would be their *responsibility to see that Indian shipping adequately participated in the coastal and overseas trade of India*. This assurance has been reiterated in the Legislative Assembly. But as stated above, Indian shipping has no more than 25 per cent of the coastal trade and none in the overseas trade and yet the Commerce Member stated in February 1936 when the share was even less that "the Government have no reason to think that the policy hitherto pursued by them has failed to provide adequately for the development of an Indian Mercantile Marine". As regards the overseas trade the Commerce Member admitted that "it is a very small share but they have some share in the Haj traffic". This Haj traffic was the occasion for another strangling rate war. The Scindia built two ships for this traffic in 1937. The Haj Committee, the Muslim community and the pilgrims appreciated the standard of comfort which the Scindia company raised by its boats in the Haj service. But the British shipping interests could not tolerate this and the passage fare was brought down from Rs.173 to Rs.25 per head! At the intervention of the members of the Assembly the Commerce Member attempted to make both the companies agree to Rs.115 for the season of 1938. The Scindia Company accepted this although it was an uneconomic rate. The Government later on allotted only 25 per cent of this trade to the National Shipping and 75 per cent was given to a British line. The Scindia could not put up with this and was compelled to suspend its service. And when once the Indian company had been driven out of the field the Government promised a huge subsidy to the British line.

The Government of India have declared, contrary to the recommendation of the Indian Mercantile Marine Committee, that they "do not consider that the proper method of encouraging the growth of the Indian Mercantile Marine is by means of reservation". They had also declared on the 27th February 1935 that "Government do not consider that in the present circumstances the grant of subsidy is the appropriate method of affording assistance to Indian shipping". And again on the 3rd April 1939 they said, "The Government of India have not found it possible for financial and other reasons to consider any scheme for the further development of the Indian Mercantile Marine which involves the grant of subsidies", and yet there was no hesitation in granting a huge subsidy to a British line for the Haj traffic when the only Indian concern operating in that line had been forced out of the field.

Not only this, the Government have not hesitated to recommend their officers to travel by Empire ships which is only a euphemism for British ships. In their negotiations for trade pacts with the United Kingdom they did not even address the British Government on the question of giving a share to Indian shipping in the overseas trade on the pretext that the scope of the discussion was limited to

tariff preference and other arrangements for the expansion of commodity trade between the two countries. The British Government in spite of the dominant position which British shipping occupies in the world has never hesitated to grant subsidies to it. Between 1924 and 1928 it granted a subsidy to liner shipping amounting to £333,698 and to tramp shipping in 1935-36 the huge sum of £4,002,183 and there is a future subsidy proposed of no less than 10 million pounds to liner shipping and 13 million 750 thousand pounds to tramp shipping besides insurance risk cover of over 5 million and merchant shipping reserve of 2 million pounds. As against this the Government of India have not "for financial and other reasons" found it possible to consider any scheme involving subsidies except to the British line engaged in the Haj traffic.

The history of shipbuilding is no less instructive. A representative conference which met at Delhi in 1918 urged upon the Government that they should take measures for the construction of modern ships in India and a resolution in the Legislative Council recommending the Government to consider in what way the industry of shipbuilding can best be encouraged in India was accepted by the Government whose spokesmen remarked that "Immediately after the war is ended and circumstances permit vigorous efforts will be made to revive it (shipbuilding)". This promise of 'vigorous efforts' was made on the 24th September 1918. The Indian Mercantile Marine Committee recognised the need of starting a shipbuilding industry in India and made definite suggestions for its establishment in 1923-24. We are now in 1941. The only contribution which the Government of India have made in fulfilment of this promise of a 'vigorous effort' towards shipbuilding has been that when the Scindia Company has succeeded in securing a site at Vizagapatam for laying out a shipyard and has asked for a rail connection with the main line of the B.N.R. and M.S.M. the Scindia Company has been required to guarantee the full amount of depreciation in the capital outlay on the extension and a certain minimum return by way of interest to the Railways concerned! Great Britain on the other hand gave no less than 47 million pounds by way of loan to shipbuilding between the years 1921 and 1940 and 320 thousand pounds by way of subsidy in 1939. There is a further proposal that loans amounting to 10 million pounds and subsidies amounting to 2½ million pounds will be given to British shipbuilding. So great is their jealousy of Indian shipping that they would not do for Indian shipbuilding what they had done for foreign countries. An assistance of nearly 2 million pounds was given to foreign countries to build their ships in England under the Trade Facilities Act but when Indian shipping asked for help under this Act it was told that no funds were available.

Such has been the history of a melancholy meanness which has characterised the British attitude towards Indian shipping and Indian shipbuilding. The provisions in the Government of India Act relating to reservation and safeguards have been dictated by the self-same underlying policy of serving, preserving and advancing British interests at the cost of India's interests and are intended and calculated to preserve to foreign nationals and particularly British capitalists, the exploitation

of the natural wealth and resources of this country. Even the grim struggle in which the British Government is engaged today has not brought about any change in their outlook or their policy. In spite of the much vaunted and much advertised aid to industries which the war is supposed to have given, one does not see any signs in India of establishment of industries which have the least chance of competing with British industries when peace returns. In India all that is being done is to help establishment of arsenals and ammunition factories which will cease to function as soon as the war ends. But in other countries the war has led to the establishment and expansion of industries which will last even after the war. Has the Government of India done anything to foster any such industries in India? The history of the efforts to start factories for manufacture of automobiles, of locomotives for Railways, of aeroplanes, and of ships and aluminium furnishes an answer to this question.

(Copy of a letter from Walchand Hirachand to Dr. Rajendra Prasad)

Scindia House
Ballard Estate
Bombay
28th June 1941

My dear Babu Rajendra Prasad,

Now that the historic function of laying the Foundation Stone of the great enterprise of the Scindia Company has been over with your good wishes and blessings, allow me to tender to you on behalf of the Scindia Co., Sheth Shantikumar, my Co-directors and myself our grateful thanks for the great trouble that you took in travelling to Vizagapatam in spite of indifferent health and for the most inspiring words in which you encouraged us to proceed with our new enterprise. Need I assure you how deeply we value your association with us on this auspicious occasion and how your distinguished presence made the function a great success? We are all deeply conscious of the fact that the Indian industries and particularly the Indian shipping industry have to rely on their own efforts under the present policy of the Government of India in the struggles which they have to face and it is a matter, therefore, of great good fortune for us that we receive not only the support of the great national organisation, of which you are an eminent leader, but we also derive the necessary strength and inspiration from you all to enable us to sustain in the fight which we have to carry on for our growth and expansion. You have truly observed that "national shipping in India has, in this sense, been closely identified with the national movement owing to a complex of forces, more indeed than any other section of Indian industrialism".

I am obliged to you for the kind words which you have uttered about myself and the compliment that you have paid to me for my "great organising talent and

drive" and while such expectations of me on your part will add to my responsibility, I assure you that in all the struggles that lie ahead we shall remember the inspiring message given by you that "there is always a tomorrow" and we shall carry on till the arrival of that happy day when, as you have remarked, "we shall be masters in our own house and be in a position to shape the economic, industrial and fiscal policies of this country in the interests of India".

With grateful thanks and kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
Walchand Hirachand

Babu Rajendra Prasad
Patna.

(Copy of a letter from Shantikumar Narottam Morarjee to Dr. Rajendra Prasad)

Scindia House
Dougall Road, Ballard Estate
Bombay
30th June 1941

My dear Babu Rajendra Prasadji,

Now that you have reached Patna, I take this opportunity of conveying to you our grateful thanks for so kindly taking the trouble of coming over to Vizag—specially when you were in indifferent health and the burden of Congress work is upon you in the absence of many other leaders.

Indeed it was very kind of you to have accepted my invitation on behalf of my Board and as I was responsible for suggesting your name, my feeling of gratefulness to you is all the more increased.

As a Congressman I am bound to feel really proud that the Scindia Company was fortunate in getting the blessings of the Great Organisation, through one of its great leaders like you.

I had tried not to overcrowd your programme at Vizag and hope have not put any undue strain on your energies during your stay at Vizag. If there have been any shortcomings I hope you will kindly overlook them.

I am sending the enclosed cheque for Rs.7,500. As you hail from that Province, Bihar has a special claim, and so Rs.2,500 should be utilised for that Province. Another sum of Rs.2,500 should be reserved for Andhra Desh, where Vizag is situated. This amount should be spent for some nation building activities, as you may choose. I may suggest the names of institutions which had approached me for donations, such as the Hindi Prachar Sangh, Khadi Propaganda, Harijan Uplift and Educational Institutions. The remaining sum of Rs.2,500 should be

sent to the central organisation for any branch you may consider best.

On our way to Bombay, one of the bogies was detached at Wardha and we sent to Sewagram to get the blessings of Bapuji. He was pleased to hear the account of the ceremony.

In his letter to you, my Chairman has rightly referred to your inspiring words that "there is always a tomorrow". We assure you that we shall always strive, under the guidance and forceful drive of our talented Chairman, until we reach that 'tomorrow'.

With grateful thanks and pranams,

Yours sincerely,
Shantikumar

Babu Rajendra Prasad
Patna.

(Copy of a letter from Dr. Rajendra Prasad to Shantikumar Narottam Morarjee)

Sadaquat Ashram
Patna
9 July 1941

My dear Shri Shantikumarjee,

Please accept my thanks for your letter dated 30th June and the cheque which you were good enough to send to me. The day I arrived here from Dacca which I visited after leaving you all at Vizagapatam, I got fever and cough from which I am just recovering. I am thankful for the opportunity you all gave me to be associated with the function.

As regards the cheque which you have been good enough to send, your instructions are clear with regard to two items, namely, one item which you allot to Bihar and the second item which is to be distributed among various institutions in Andhra. I shall deal with these two items as desired after consulting such friends as I consider necessary. Your wishes with regard to the third item of Rs.2,500 are not quite clear. You say "the remaining sum of Rs.2,500 should be sent to the central organisation for any branch you consider best". I do not understand what particular central organisation you have in view. I propose to hand it over to Thakkar Bapa for Harijan work and for work amongst aborigines. The latter is particularly in need of funds. I shall be obliged for an early reply.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

Sj. Shantikumar Narottam Morarjee
Scindia House, Dougall Road
Ballard Estate, Bombay.

(Copy of a letter from Shantikumar Narottam Morarjee to Dr. Rajendra Prasad)

Scindia House
Dougall Road, Ballard Estate
Bombay
11th July 1941

My dear Babu Shri Rajendra Prasadji,

I am grateful for your kind letter of the 9th instant. I was very sorry to read that you had fever and cough but was glad to note that you were recovering, and trust that you have got rid of your trouble by the time this reaches you.

I have left the entire matter of spending the balance of Rs.2,500 to your decision and have no objection to your sending the same to Thakkar Bapa for Harijan work and for work amongst the aborigines. After all, the upliftment of Harijans and aborigines is an important part of the programme of the “central organisation”—by which I mean the Congress.

With pranams,

Yours sincerely,
Shantikumar N. Morarjee

Babu Shri Rajendra Prasadji
Sadaquat Ashram
Patna.

19. *‘The Camouflage of Hindustani’—an article by Avadh Bihari Lal, Ex-Vice President, Bihar Provincial Aryan League*

June 8, 1941

The question of Hindi and Hindustani, which has for some time past tremendously agitated the public mind of India in general and of Bihar in particular, can now no longer be considered to be a matter of mere academic interest or sheer dialectical jugglery. It is in fact a political problem of the first magnitude and as such deserves serious attention and careful handling at the hands of all right thinking people of the country. To the Hindus it is a question of life and death. There is behind this Hindustani movement an organised conspiracy at work which seeks totally to annihilate the culture and civilization of the mighty Hindu nation, by virtue of which it once reached the highest pinnacle of glory, and even now, fallen on evil days as it is, it occupies a position all unique. Those having the interest of Hindudom at heart cannot afford to be blind to it.

This Hindustani is the veritable embodiment of the dream of those Muslim dreamers who do not like to let Hindustan remain Hindustan, but want to transform it into Pakistan or Muslimistan; and who have been working to this end directly through the Muslim League, and indirectly through other Indian Muslims going under the name of 'patriots'. In plain words, this also is part and parcel of the mischievous Pakistan scheme trotted out by the Muslim League.

GAME BEHIND HINDUSTANI

To a normally constituted person it need not be emphasised that the culture and civilization of a nation are the very essence of its being. It can live only so long as they (its culture and civilization) are intact. If you want to kill a nation, you first destroy its culture, and the nation will die of itself. The language of a nation is the mainstay of its culture, and in order to bring about the nation's death attempts are made to strangle its mother tongue.

The Muslim Machiavellis decided upon taking the present times by the forelock. With a view to crushing the culture of the Hindus, and thus making them lame and mutilated, they hit upon the plan of destroying their language—the life and soul of their culture. Behind the veil of a common language they thought of translating their machinations into action. To our great misfortune they got it in this unholy design the injudicious support of some Hindu Congress leaders, who are afraid even of calling themselves Hindus lest they should be characterised as communal and lose their leadership. The main object of these Congressite leaders have all along been to buy the goodwill of Muslims at any cost. They are out to sacrifice our culture and language at the altar of artificial Hindu-Muslim unity, artificial inasmuch as no true unity is possible by this policy of appeasement and self-surrender. They are out to build on our ashes a fanciful edifice of Muslim-dominated swaraj. They did not pause to think; and without consulting the Hindus and the Hindi-speaking persons or their institutions, they set about to vivisection our language and impose upon us Muslim language and culture. The desire for blotting out of existence Hindudom and all that it stands for, unsuccessfully cherished for centuries by the forefathers of our friends, now began to fructify by dint of active cooperation of our self-made masters, the so-called leaders. The Muslim rulers of India had failed to achieve their desired object simply because our leaders were vigilant and had made us suck the nectar of our culture through our mother tongue. Our language—the very image of our culture which, in spite of their best endeavours, the Muslim rulers could not destroy during their long regime—our leaders are now out to kill simply in order to please the Muslims. It is really surprising that in such cases they assume the role of our leaders; but when we are in trouble the spectre of communalism scares them away from us. They cannot then deign to hear the tales of our miseries.

LINGUA FRANCA OF INDIA

It is needless to say that there have been long and heated discussions over the question of the lingua franca of India ever since the inception of the struggle for liberty in the country. Reputed men of letters and persons of light and leading have had their say in this connection. By a consensus of opinion Hindi alone has been declared fit for that exalted position. It bears an undying stamp of the glories of Indian history of the last millennium. It was from the thrilling songs of that immortal bard Chandbardan that the redoubtable Prithwiraj drew inspiration. The heroic poems of the celebrated Hindi poet, Bhushan, urged the valiant Chhatrapati Shivaji on the succour and support of the dying Hindudom in the palmy days of the great Mughal. The Mohammedan poets, Kutban and Malik Mohammad Jayasi, drunk deep at the Pierian spring of the Hindi Muse, helped to make Hussain Shah and Sher Singh mighty popular monarchs of India. Can any good be done to the country by annihilating such a potent and time-honoured language?

Only that language can aspire to claim to be the lingua franca of India which has an affinity with the other languages of the country. Urdu has absolutely no kinship with Bengali, Marathi, Gujarati, etc. Therefore, it cannot be welcomed by persons speaking these languages. So one from among the languages Gujarati, Marathi, Hindi, etc., must be chosen for the lingua franca, and not Urdu. Hindi is by common consent, of all the Indian languages, the most widely spoken and understood. Therefore, popular choice has fallen on it.

When Hindi was given precedence over other provincial languages in the choice of the lingua franca of India, the Government found itself placed in an awkward position. The power and influence of the majority community must not be allowed to grow unhampered. The interest of the minority community must needs be safeguarded. Urdu, as synonymous with Islam, was to receive a strong backing. Thus, this attitude of the Government, coupled with a strong Islamic bias of the Muslims and the placating mentality of the Hindus, gave birth to the hybrid Hindustani language. Our leaders found in it the solution of the much vexed problem of Hindu-Muslim unity for which they had so long been running from pillar to post. Out of the blessed commingling of the Hindi and Urdu languages, they said, would be born a 'common language' which would represent the cultures of both the communities and facilitate understanding between each other.

HINDUSTANI, ANOTHER NAME FOR URDU

Now what exactly is the nature of this Hindustani? To understand it we have just to examine the language of the talks (on Hindustani) given by Doctors Rajendra Prasad, Tarachand and Abdul Huq from the Delhi Radio Station, and also the language of the textbooks prepared and prescribed by the Hindustani Committee set up by the Bihar Government. We would find here, to our

disillusionment and disappointment, that Hindustani is but another name for Urdu, embodying the Persian and Arabic cultures.

Most of us are obviously unaware of the motive behind the movement for Hindustani and the forces that are at work.

It is pertinent, therefore, here to refer to the 1935 session of the All-India Hindi Sahitya Sammelan at which Mahatma Gandhi, in the course of his Presidential speech, said that Hindi alone deserved to be the 'lingua franca' of India. Urdu, he added, was the language of the Muslims and written in the script of the Quran, and it was open to the Muslims to keep it alive if they so liked.

This was followed by a storm in the Muslim camp. Forthwith rushed to Delhi to the Mahatma the stalwarts of the Nawabi Anjuman-i-Taraqqi-i-Urdu of Aurangabad (Nizam's State) and forced him to write that "undoubtedly Urdu is the mother tongue of both the Hindus and the Mohammedans in parts of India, where it is entitled to that position". This remark of the Mahatma was easily interpreted as denoting that by Hindustani was meant Urdu. With the Mahatma on their side, the Muslims received undue encouragement; the result has been an open secret now. Now, satisfied with the theoretical aspect of what the Mahatma had said, they, with the ungrudging support and active cooperation of the Hindu Congressmen of Bihar, began their anti-Hindi campaign under the pretext of evolving a common language for both Hindus and Muslims. From this common language all words derived from Sanskrit and Prakrit, in common use in Hindi, were scrupulously weeded out and instead of them Arabic and Persian words, some unintelligible even to an average Muslim of Bihar, were stuffed into it, for our Muslim friends cannot tolerate anything that smacks of Hindudom. From every social, political and religious move of theirs it is abundantly clear that they are bent upon obliterating the languages, scripts and literatures of the country, which are the depositories of ancient Hindu culture and civilization. This move is organised on a country-wide basis and has been at work for a fairly long time. Arabic and Persian words are fast supplanting the Sanskrit or kindred words of the vocabularies of Bengali, Marathi, Gujarati, Telugu and other modern Indian languages, all sprung up from Sanskrit. Unfortunately for us, some of our Hindu Congress leaders are also helping them in this sinister design in order to keep their leadership intact.

LET BIHAR RISE TO THE OCCASION ...

It is high time for patriotic Indians to rise to their sense of duty. On us, Biharis, rests a special responsibility inasmuch as our Province has been particularly selected as a convenient ground for this unholy alliance and experiment in the vivisection of our language and culture. Upon the success of this experiment in Bihar—which contains about 85 per cent Hindus, and possesses a language wherein Sanskrit element predominates—will greatly depend its success elsewhere in this country. The language that will be created here will be imposed upon the people in the rest of India.

HINDUSTANI COMMITTEE

We all know that during the Congress regime in Bihar the Hon. Education Minister, with the consent and cooperation of his Congressite colleagues formed a committee known as the Hindustani Committee. This committee seeks to give us that new-fangled Hindustani language of which so much has been said above. The members of the committee are mostly Mohammedan scholars of Arabic and Persian and avowed champions of Islamic culture. The few Hindus that are on the committee are without exception all "National", having little interest in the well-being of Hindi, if not its declared enemies. They can by no means represent the Hindus or the Hindi-speaking populace of the Province. Can there be a more glaring instance of the callousness of the ex-Congress Government to Hindi and the feeling of the overwhelmingly vast majority of the people that speaks it?

HAVOC WROUGHT BY HINDUSTANI

Reliable sources reveal that there has been some sort of compromise between Dr. Rajendra Prasad and Dr. Abdul Huq as a result of which this sham of Hindustani has been introduced in the Province against the wish of the people. Some interested persons have now lent their cooperation to the Hindustani Committee with some ulterior motive of their own. The havoc that the committee has been working so long is too well-known to require further elucidation. There is scarcely time for futile discussions now. The time to keep quiet under a false sense of decency and respect for personality is also over. Our future is growing darker day by day. The Hindus must be on the alert and endeavour to preserve their language and literature. They must combine to offer a united front to those bent upon ruining them. In clear and unequivocal terms and in a distinct, forceful and united voice our so-called leaders too must be told that they have absolutely no right surreptitiously to barter away our language, culture or anything that is dear to us. It must also be brought home to them that we will not budge an inch towards the dismal abyss to which they are leading us. Governments also must be cautioned that riding roughshod over the sentiments and rights of the majority community with a view to pleasing unwarrantedly the small minority that the Government itself (sic). We will not so easily allow our language and culture to be maimed or massacred—the language and culture which our forefathers kept alive so long with their very lifeblood. Om Shanti!

20. *Scheme for the utilisation of Sri Shantikumar Narottam Morarjee Fund of Rs.1,250 for Harijan work in Bihar*

Ranchi

August 1, 1941

Out of the sum of Rs.2,500 (Two thousand five hundred) received by Dr. Rajendra Prasad from Shri Shantikumar Narottam Morarjee of Scindia Steam Navigation Company, a sum of Rs.1,250 has been earmarked for aboriginal work and the balance of Rs.1,250 for Harijan work in Bihar. This note relates to the amount relating to Harijan work.

(i) The sum of Rs.1,250 has been kept at the disposal of the Harijan Sevak Sangh, Delhi, by Dr. Rajendra Prasad.

(ii) It is proposed to spend this amount on *welfare work only* within 2 years and *no part of the same will be spent for administration purposes*.

The annual [amount] thus available will be Rs.625. Out of this sum of Rs.625, half, i.e. Rs.312/8/- is to be spent in starting new, as well as helping in restarting the lingering Harijan hostels with token grants. The amount of the grant is left to the discretion of the Provincial Secretary which he will decide according to the needs of the hostel, as also the consideration of the Sangh as a whole.

The balance of Rs.312/8/ should be spent in helping poor Harijan students, for getting them admitted in educational as well as vocational institutions, in and outside Bihar. Also they should be helped for their textbooks, examination fees and such other items.

A.V. Thakkar
General Secretary

Copies to:

- (1) Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Patna.
- (2) Raja Radhikaraman Pd. Sinha, Surujpura, Bihar H.S.S.
- (3) Secretary.

21. *Proceedings of the Executive Committee meeting of the District Harijan Sevak Sangh, Bhagalpur, held on 24 August 1941 at 4.30 p.m. at Mukhteshwar Babu's residence*

Members present:

1. Babu Mukhteshwar Prasad.
2. Smt. Muneshwari Devi.
3. Pandit Gaya Pd. Misra, Kaviraj.

4. Babu Sahdeo Jha.
5. Babu Mahabir Das.
6. Babu Mahadeo Lal 'Visharad', Asstt. Member.
7. Babu Haldhar Pd. Choudhury.
8. Babu Mahesh Narain, Asstt. Member.

In the absence of the President, Babu Mukhteshwar Prasad was voted to the Chair.

(1) The Budget for the year 1941-42 was passed (amount being Rs.2,369 on receipt side and Rs.2,199 on expenditure side).

(2) Resolved that the following persons and associations etc. be requested to contribute (the following amounts noted against each) towards the Harijan uplift of the district.

- (1) For Rs.500—the District Board, Bhagalpur.
- (2) For Rs.1,000—the Municipal Board, Bhagalpur.
- (3) For Rs.300—the Commissioner, Bhagalpur.
- (4) For Rs.200—the District Magistrate, Bhagalpur.
- (5) For Rs.400—the Chairman, Sadar, Banka, Supaul and Madhipura Local Boards (Rs. 100 from each of them).
- (6) For Rs.360—the Central and Provincial Board of Harijan Sevak Sangh.
- (7) For Rs.200—the Receiver of the Raj Banail Estate, Bhagalpur.
- (8) For Rs.1,000—the Manager of the Picture Palace and the rich and respectable gentries of the district.

(3) Resolved that Babu Haldhar Prasad Choudhury, B.L., Vice-Chairman, District Board, Bhagalpur, be elected as a Vice-President of the Sangh.

(4) Resolved that Babu Nawal Kishore Jha, Asstt. Headmaster, T.N.J. Collegiate School, Bhagalpur, be requested to audit the last two years' account of Babu Biswanath Prasad, 'Harijan Sevak', and submit his report in the next meeting.

Mukhteshwar Prasad
President
District Harijan Sevak Sangh, Bhagalpur

P.S.:

- (1) The Cinema Manager be requested to give only two days' charity show within the year.
- (2) The rich and respectable gentries of the district be requested to contribute not less than Rs.12 annually.
- (3) The District Board, Local Boards, and Municipal Board be requested for the books etc. (reading and writing materials) for the Harijan students reading in the schools of the local bodies.

- (4) The Commissioner be requested for the books etc. for those students only who are reading in the College or H.E. Schools.
- (5) The District Magistrate, Bhagalpur, be requested for furniture for the Harijan Hostel.

Copy forwarded to the President, B.P.C.C., Sadaquat Ashram, Patna, for information.

Mahabir Das
Secretary
District Harijan Sevak Sangh
Bhagalpur

22. *Copy of a letter dated 30 November 1941 from Binodanand Jha and A. V. Thakkar to a friend*

Camp: Calcutta
November 30, 1941

Dear Friend,

Herewith are sent a few notes which Babu Binodanand Jha, Shri Motilal Kejriwal and A. V. Thakkar have penned about the formation of the proposed Santal and Pahadia Seva Sangh in Santal Parganas, after our tour of 14 days in that district. You will agree that it is now high time to found such a Sangh for the service of our long neglected brethren of the hilly parts in Santal Parganas.

We would be much obliged to you if you will kindly enlighten us with your views about the proposal. We can no longer afford to neglect these tribes as we have done so far. Just as other Associations are working in other parts of the country for the betterment of the Bhils, Gonds, Oraons, Mundas, Kacharis, and other aboriginal tribes of other Provinces, we in Bihar should take up all welfare work for Santals and Pahadias, who number no less than 8 lacs and one lac respectively in this one district only.

Kindly send your suggestions to Babu Binodanand Jha, M.L.A., Deoghar, about the scheme, the details of which are only tentative, as put forth in the notes. You will please also recommend the names of any friends who are likely to become pledged 20 years' [whole-]time workers of Class (1) of the Sangh.

Awaiting your early reply and words of approval of the scheme.

We are,
Yours sincerely,
Binodanand Jha
A. V. Thakkar

Enclosure:

THE SANTAL AND PAHADIA SEVA SANGH, SANTAL PARGANAS

Deoghar

November 29, 1941

I. The Sangh will consist of two classes of members:

- (1) Those who pledge themselves to work exclusively and whole-time for a period of not less than 20 years for the service of the Santals and Pahadias. They will put in 6 months of probation; and
- (2) Those who are intensely devoted to the service, but who cannot devote whole-time to this social and charitable work.

II. Whole-time workers of Class (1) will not do *any political work*, much less take part in satyagraha, but will devote all their thought, action and time to the various ways of social, economic, educational, and other ameliorative services of the Santals and Pahadias, resident in the Santal Parganas.

The members of this class shall draw allowance as per scale that may be laid down for the maintenance of themselves and their families, if any.

III. Members of the Sangh of Class (2) will take intense and serious interest in the service of these two tribes, will take part in the management, hold quarterly meetings where matters of policy, finance and administration will be discussed and decided. They will use their influence with the Hindu society and with the Government of the day, and the local bodies, in the interest of the two tribes, and get subscriptions, donations, grants-in-aid, etc. for the Sangh.

IV. Members of Class (1) will take solemn vows in the presence of the President, Secretary, and other prominent members of the Sangh, and, in the name of God, that he will devote all his energies for this service alone, and will be satisfied with such allowance [as] the Sangh can afford to pay.

V. The welfare work of the Sangh will be restricted to the Santals and Pahadias; and though the Santals are eight times the Pahadias they will give equal attention to both, as the Pahadias are by far the more backward and primitive. In all their free institutions, Sevaks will try to keep equal numbers of Santal and Pahadia students.

VI. The welfare work will chiefly consist of (1) making the tribesmen literate in Hindi through the medium of their own mother tongue, Santali or Malto, which dialects the whole-time workers should learn as soon as possible; (2) teaching them the cultivation and spinning of cotton and weaving cloth, and working in tusser, besides (3) teaching them industries like carpentry, smithy, tailoring, etc. that may be found [to be] to the liking and adaptability of these tribes and may be conveniently arranged for by the Sangh; (4) giving them adequate knowledge in the cultivation of various crops in the soil, by attaching

farms, if possible, to the ashrams; (5) doing propaganda and the holding of conferences of these tribes from time to time; (6) preaching abstinence from all kinds of drinks and drugs; and (7) adopting such other methods as may lead to their benefit and uplift, as a part of the Indian community.

VII. The scale of allowance payable for the maintenance of the whole-time members of Class (1) may be fixed, say, for the present up to Rs.20 (Rupees twenty) p.m. according to circumstances, unless the worker is of very high qualifications, in which case special consideration for his allowance will be made.

VIII. The headquarters of the Sangh will be in Dumka or any place within a few miles of it. Welfare work will be undertaken in all the six sub-divisions, and especially in the Damin-i-Koh area, the home of the Pahadias, and which is situated in the four sub-divisions of Rajmahal, Pakur, Godda and Dumka.

IX. Pandit Binodanand Jha has kindly agreed to be President of the Sangh, and to supervise its work in general. At present he is not in a position to divorce himself from politics, but as soon as he is able to do so he will try to devote himself *mainly* to this work. Shri A.V. Thakkar and Shri Motilal Kejriwal have agreed to be members of the Sangh. Services of other prominent friends of Bihar and Santal Parganas will be enlisted.

X. The Managing Committee will consist of all the members of Class (1) and Class (2), and they will have full powers of managing and running the institution in all its details. If thought necessary, they will appoint an Executive Committee of 5 or 7 members to arrange the day-to-day affairs of the Sangh on its behalf.

XI. All the properties of the Sangh will vest in a Board of Trustees to be selected by the Managing Committee.

XII. The Sangh will make rules and by-laws for all the work connected with the formation and successful conduct of the Sangh.

Binodanand Jha
A.V. Thakkar

23. Jawaharlal Nehru's draft of the Working Committee Instructions

Bardoli
30 December 1941

Recent developments in the world situation have brought war near to India's frontiers. This may lead to internal dislocation in certain parts of the country and there is a possibility of some cities being subjected to aerial attack. Whatever dangers and difficulties might arise, the real antidote to them is to remain cool and collected and on no account to give way to nervousness and excitement. Congressmen must remain at their posts and continue their service of the people; wherever necessity arises they should yield places of safety to those in greater

need and be ready to render aid to those who may require it.

The Congress can help and serve the people in the difficult times ahead only if its organization is strong and disciplined and Congressmen individually and Congress Committees are able to command confidence in their respective localities. Congress Committees and Congressmen should therefore address themselves immediately to the task of strengthening the organization and reviving and maintaining contacts with the people in the villages and towns. Every village should, as far as possible, receive the message of the Congress and be prepared to face such difficulties as might arise.

The constructive programme adopted by the Congress, and explained from time to time by Gandhiji, is of particular importance at this juncture. It is meant not only to bring about unity among various groups, to remove disabilities which keep sections of the community backward and depressed, to promote self-reliance and the cooperative spirit among the people, to increase production and have fairer distribution, but it also furnishes the best opportunity and means of contact with the people and service to them which are necessary for winning their confidence. The Working Committee therefore call upon Congress Committees and workers to further this programme intensively, and thus exercise a steadying and strengthening influence in times of dislocation and uneasiness.

During such times there is always a possibility of trouble being created by unsocial elements in the country. To avoid the emergence of such a situation and to meet it when it arises, volunteers should be organized in both the urban and rural areas. Such organizations should be formed on the basis of strict non-violence and it should always be remembered that the Congress adheres to these principles. These volunteers may cooperate with other organizations working for similar ends. This volunteer organization is meant for rendering service to the people both normally and in the event of possible internal commotion. It should therefore avoid conflict with the authorities.

Prices of commodities have already risen and are causing distress among the people and no adequate steps have so far been taken by the authorities to meet this situation. These tendencies are likely to be accentuated in the future, and dislocation of trade and transport, due to stress of war, may lead to scarcity of the necessities of life as well as of many other things which are of everyday use. Big-scale industries in other countries have suffered heavily on account of the war and transport of goods has become difficult on account of military requirements. China has largely overcome these difficulties by a widespread development of village industries. India may have to face similar problems; and village and cottage industries afford a solution, desirable in itself, and more particularly suited to the needs of the moment. Such industries can escape to a large extent the effects of dislocation of trade and transport. It is therefore necessary that this item of the constructive programme should be widely taken up and worked with vigour and earnestness so that the countryside may be rendered, as far as possible, self-sufficient in regard to the necessities of life.

In case of emergency, when instructions are issued to the public by the

authorities for the preservation of life and property and the maintenance of public order, Congressmen should avoid conflict with the authorities. They should carry out such instructions, unless they are contrary to Congress directions.

24. *Dr. Rajendra Prasad's draft of the Working Committee Instructions*

Recent developments in the war have brought it near India's door. The Working Committee warns the people against giving way to panic. People should face bravely whatever befalls them. Some cities which are otherwise open cities may become targets of attack. Those who are afraid about their lives and possessions would do well to go to places they may consider safer. To remain cool and collected under all circumstances whatever happens is the real antidote against impending danger. Congressmen will remain at their posts and yield places of safety to those in greater need and be ready to render aid to those who may require it.

The Congress can help and serve the people in the difficult times ahead only if its own organisation is strong and Congressmen individually and Congress Committees are able to command confidence in their respective localities. Intensive work amongst them on the constructive programme adopted by the Congress and explained by Gandhiji from time to time and more recently in a pamphlet entitled "Constructive programme—Its meaning and place" furnishes the best opportunity and means of that contact and service which are necessary for winning their confidence. The Working Committee therefore calls upon Congress workers and Congress Committees to become centres for such intensive work and a steadying influence in times of panic.

The Congress must continue to adhere strictly to the principle of non-violence in the struggle for independence and the Congress organisation must continue to be conducted on the principle of non-violence. All Congress workers must continue to remain bound by their pledge to remain non-violent in the discharge of their duty. It is necessary to emphasise this in view of the possibility of trouble being created by unsocial elements in the country and in case a communal clash unfortunately occurs in any place. To meet such situations organisation of *Shanti Dals* is necessary. They should be formed on the basis of strict non-violence and should work in cooperation with other organisations working for similar lines and similarly pledged to non-violence. They should avoid conflict with authority, and are not intended to be and should not be organised on anything like a semi-military basis but only for rendering service to the people in the event of internal commotion such as communal rioting.

On account of dislocation of trade and transport due to stress of war it is not unlikely that people may have to face scarcity of necessities of life and many other things which are of everyday use. Large industries have suffered heavily on account of the war in other countries and transport of goods has become difficult

on account of military requirements and action. India may have to face similar difficulties. Village and cottage industries can escape the effects of such dislocation of trade and transport to a considerable extent. It is therefore necessary that this item for the constructive programme should be taken up in right earnest and work on it extended so that the countryside may be rendered as far as possible self-sufficient in regard to necessities of life like cloth and food and things of everyday use like soap, paper and the like, all of which can be easily produced in all parts of the country.

There may be air-raids. People should obey the instructions issued by the authority and Congressmen should afford such protection and render such service as they can to sufferers.

It may so happen that the enemy occupies parts of the country. Congressmen should never show subservience to the invader. No Congressman can possibly cooperate with him in such occupation even on pain of death.

25. Resolution on the political situation issued by the Congress Working Committee at its meeting held at Bardoli on 30 December 1941

Fourteen months have elapsed since the Working Committee held their last meeting and during this period the world has fallen ever deeper into the abyss of war and rushed headlong towards self-destruction. The members of the Committee have met again on their release from prison and given earnest thought to all the national and international developments during this fateful period of human history. The burden of guiding the Congress and nation at this critical stage when old problems assume a new significance and war approaches the frontiers of India bringing new problems in its train, is a heavy one which the Committee can only shoulder worthily with the full cooperation of the people of India. The Committee have endeavoured to keep in view the principles and objectives for which the Congress has stood during these past many years and considered them in the larger context of world conditions and world freedom. The Committee are convinced that full freedom for the people of India is essential even, and more especially, in the present state of world turmoil, not only for India's sake but for the sake of the world. The Committee also hold that real peace and freedom can only be established and endure on the basis of world cooperation between free nations.

The Committee gave full expression to their attitude towards the war in their statement issued on September 14, 1939, wherein they condemned Nazi and Fascist aggression and expressed their willingness to help the cause of freedom and democracy, provided the objectives of the war were clearly stated and acted upon, in so far as was possible, in the present. If freedom and democracy were those objectives, then they must necessarily include the ending of imperialism and the recognition of the independence of India. Subsequent pronouncements

made on behalf of the British Government and their reactionary and oppressive policy made it clear that this Government was determined to maintain and intensify its imperialist hold and exploitation of the Indian people. British policy was one of deliberate insult to Indian nationalism, of a perpetuation of unrestrained authoritarianism, and the encouragement of disruptive and reactionary elements. Not only has every offer made by the Congress for an honourable compromise been rejected, but public opinion voiced by organisations regarded as moderate has also been flouted.

The Congress was, therefore, compelled, in order to defend the honour and the elementary rights of the Indian people and the integrity of the nationalist movement, to request Gandhiji to guide the Congress in the action that should be taken. Mahatma Gandhi, desirous of avoiding embarrassment to his opponent as far as possible, especially during the perils and dangers of war, limited the satyagraha movement which he started to selected individuals who conformed to certain tests he had laid down. That satyagraha has now proceeded for over fourteen months and about twenty-five thousand Congressmen have suffered imprisonment, while many thousands of others who offered satyagraha in the Frontier Province and elsewhere were not arrested. The Committee desire to express their respectful appreciation of Gandhiji's leadership and of the response of the nation to it, and are of opinion that this has strengthened the people.

Throughout this period the attitude of the British Government has been hostile to Indian freedom and it has functioned in India as a completely authoritarian government, insulting the deeply cherished convictions and feelings of the people. Neither the professions of freedom and democracy, nor the perils and catastrophes that have come in the wake of war, have affected this attitude and policy, and such changes as have taken place have been for the worse.

The recent release of a number of political prisoners has no significance or importance, and the circumstances attending it, and official pronouncements made, make it clear that it is not connected with any change of policy. Large numbers of detenus, who are kept in prison under the Defence of India Act without trial, and whose only offence seems to be that they are ardent patriots impatient of foreign rule and determined to achieve the independence of the country, still remain in prison. Recent arrests of prominent persons and their treatment in prison also indicate that the old policy is being pursued as before.

While there has been no change in Britain's policy towards India the Working Committee must nevertheless take into full consideration the new world situation that has arisen by the development of the war into a world conflict and its approach to India. The sympathies of the Congress must inevitably lie with the peoples who are the subjects of aggression and who are fighting for their freedom. But only a free and independent India can be in a position to undertake the defence of the country on a national basis and be of help in the furtherance of the larger causes that are emerging from the storm of war. The whole background in India is one of hostility and of distrust of the British Government and not even the most far-reaching promises can alter this background, nor can a subject India

offer voluntary or willing help to an arrogant imperialism which is indistinguishable from fascist authoritarianism.

The Committee is, therefore, of opinion that the resolution of the A.I.C.C. passed in Bombay on September 16, 1940, holds today and defines Congress policy still.

¹This resolution was confirmed by the All India Congress Committee at their meeting at Wardha on 16 January 1942, with the addition of the words 'from any quarter' after 'subject to aggression' in the second sentence of the penultimate paragraph

26. Statement issued by the Congress Working Committee relieving Mahatma Gandhi of the responsibility laid upon him by its Bombay resolution

The Working Committee have received the following letter from Gandhiji and recognise the validity of the point he has raised and therefore relieve him of the responsibility laid upon him by the Bombay resolution referred to by Gandhiji. But the Committee assure him that the policy of non-violence adopted under his guidance for the attainment of Swaraj and which has proved so successful in leading to mass awakening and otherwise will be adhered to by the Congress. The Working Committee further assure him that it would like to extend its scope as far as possible even in free India. The Committee hope that Congressmen will render him full assistance in the prosecution of his mission, including the offering of civil disobedience.

(Copy of a letter from Mahatma Gandhi to Abul Kalam Azad)

Bardoli
30 December 1941

Dear Maulana Saheb,

In the course of discussion in the Working Committee, I discovered that I had committed a grave error in the interpretation of the Bombay resolution. I had interpreted it to mean that the Congress was to refuse participation in the present or all war on the ground principally of non-violence. I found to my astonishment that most members differed from my interpretation and held that the opposition need not be on the ground of non-violence. On re-reading the Bombay resolution I found that the differing members were right and that I had read into it a meaning which its letter could not bear. The discovery of the error makes it impossible for me to lead the Congress in the struggle for resistance to war effort on grounds in which non-violence was not indispensable. I could not, for instance, identify myself with opposition to war effort on the ground of ill-will against Great Britain. The resolution contemplated material association with

Britain in the war effort as a price for guaranteed independence of India. If such was my view and I believed in the use of violence for gaining independence and yet refused participation in the effort as the price of that independence, I would consider myself guilty of unpatriotic conduct. It is my certain belief that only non-violence can save India and the world from self-extinction. Such being the case, I must continue my mission whether I am alone or assisted by an organisation or individuals. You will, therefore, please relieve me of the responsibility laid upon me by the Bombay resolution. I must continue civil disobedience for free speech against all war with such Congressmen and others whom I select and who believe in the non-violence I have contemplated and are willing to conform to prescribed conditions.

I will not, at this critical period, select for civil disobedience those whose services are required to steady and help the people in their respective localities.

Yours sincerely,
M.K. Gandhi

27. Appeal to Congressmen and members of the A.I.C.C. by Communist members of the A.I.C.C.

Wardha
January 15, 1942

Brother Congressmen, Members of the A.I.C.C.,

In this session of the A.I.C.C. you are called upon to make a historic decision. It is a decision which, if rightly taken and courageously implemented, relying upon the strength and the unity of the people, can transform the fate of our country as no single decision ever had. You are called upon to re-define the policy of the Congress towards the one issue which has dominated the lives of our people and of the peoples of the world for the last two years—namely, war. You are required to give a decisive lead to our countrymen at the most critical point of our nation's life.

The danger of foreign attack is knocking at the door. Our people left defenceless and unarmed by the enslavement of the imperialist rulers look up to you for a lead. The people groaning under the crushing load of war economy dominated by imperialist interests look up to you for relief. But these are only parts in the one all-embracing issue which is before you.

A NEW SITUATION

The world situation has been transformed since Hitler's attack upon the Soviet

Union. A new regrouping of world forces faces us. The war is no longer a battle of rival imperialist blocs in which the people are pawns and victims. It is a battle of the united front of the peoples led by the heroic people of the Socialist Soviet Union against Hitler-fascism and its allies. It is a war in which the PEOPLE are the main actors shaping the destiny of mankind towards a juster and higher world order.

Imperialists and fascists started this war for settling the issue of world domination. Both of them aimed at solving the conflict in their own favour, by unleashing a war of destruction against the Soviet Union, the base of the world revolution.

A PEOPLES' WAR

The peoples of the world, rallying ever firmly round the Soviet Union and round peoples' war aims, are advancing to win it, finally and decisively, against Hitler-fascism, against world imperialism as a whole. The aim of this growing world front is the victory of the peoples including that of the German people, and not of any imperialist group or clique. Its aim is peoples' peace based on the independence and democratic liberties for *every* nation and not on an imperialist redivision of 'colonies' and countries.

The victory over the powerful forces of Hitler-fascism and its allies requires peoples' mobilisation in every country. It requires unity and the free and voluntary cooperation of the peoples in a powerful world front. The all-peoples' war against fascism can and has to be won only as a war of peoples' liberation. This is being realised more and more. A people's upsurge is rising more and more powerfully in the Nazi-occupied countries of Europe, in Britain, in the Americas, in the Dominions, round the war and peace aims set forth by the Soviet Union.

WAR OF LIBERATION—THE ISSUE

The walls of the Prison of the Peoples—the British Empire—have to give way if people have to stretch out their hands to people in one solid joint front to ensure victory over the common enemy. These walls must crumble by the joint efforts of the British and the Indian people in winning the war against the enemy of humanity. The new world situation has placed this on the agenda.

Are you going to play your part in it? The peoples of the Soviet Union, of China, of the Nazi-occupied countries of Europe, of Britain and America, who are fighting with unparalleled courage and sacrifice in the defence of the common cause of freedom, are watching you. Are you going to take practical steps to unite the people, and relying upon their inexhaustible strength lead them to break the shackles that hold them from manning the battle lines of world freedom where today our freedom as well is being fought for? This is what they are asking you. Are you going to come forward to defend the urgent and vital interests of your

people in this moment of growing menace? This is what your people are asking you. You stand before a historic opportunity. The duty to your own people, the responsibility to further the cause of our national freedom, demand of you a positive policy of action towards the new situation—towards the war in its present phase. This is the issue before you in this session.

BRITISH POLICY

But where is the war of liberation, you will ask. We see nothing but autocratic imperialism riding roughshod over our people. We see the same thirst for world domination now seeking its objective, perhaps through a new alliance. If this were not so, if this were a war for freedom and democracy, why should the British Government spurn the alliance of a free India? Why should they continue—nay, intensify—their regime of enslavement and repression? Thousands rot in jail without trial and inquiry. A war regime which looks to the profits of foreign capital and not to the needs of the people, nor to their real defence, reduces the masses to penury and heaps humiliation on their heads. War effort and recruitment is carried out with coercion and compulsion. Mr. Amery reads us insolent sermons every month. Where is the war of liberation in all this, you ask. In the words of the Working Committee Resolution you conclude: No subject India can offer willing or voluntary help to an arrogant imperialism.

NOT A BARGAIN, BUT A BATTLE

But we Communists are not asking you or subject India to bargain with imperialism or to offer help to it, willing or otherwise. That is not the issue before the session as we see it. The issue is what practical policy shall we adopt to fight that very subjection which condemns our people to these humiliations and sufferings, which prevents us from defending our own people in this crisis, which hinders us from taking our place in the battle-front of world freedom. The issue is not that we help imperialism, but that we help ourselves and our own people. The issue is that we help our allies in the common cause of freedom, the peoples of the Soviet Union, of China, and the British people. Our struggle for freedom is a part of the gigantic struggle for liberation which the peoples are carrying on against the aims of Hitler-fascism and its allies. The victory in this struggle requires India's freedom. That is why the progressive sections of the British people are carrying on such a persistent campaign for India's "release for freedom". *What is required of the A.I.C.C. [is] people's action which will force the imperialist government to relinquish its autocratic and repressive hold on the conduct of war and on the governance of the country, enabling us to organise a popular defence, to protect the interests of the people, and to participate in the war of liberation to achieve our own freedom.*

FIGHT IMPERIALIST REACTION

We have not the slightest reason to be surprised at the continuance of the reactionary and repressive policy of the British Government in India. It is not the imperialist bourgeoisie which willed this world-wide anti-fascist alignment and the war of liberation which has come about as a result of it. It has come in spite of them and as a result of the disasters which their reactionary policies brought in their trail during the last two years or more. When the new alignment came after Hitler's attack upon the U.S.S.R., it corresponded with a sharp division in the camp of the ruling circles of Britain and America. The most reactionary pro-fascist section, the 'appeasers' in England and the 'isolationists' in America, were pushed into the background. A section which is prepared to bow to the demand of the people for 100 per cent cooperation and alliance with the U.S.S.R. to defeat Hitler's armies is being battered on the eastern front; the failure to achieve complete coordination with the peace aims of the Soviet Union and of the progressive peoples, the continuation of the enslavement of India, are such policies which hinder quick and decisive victory over fascism and of the cause of liberation. The progressive sections of the British and American people are fighting these reactionary imperialist policies which weaken the united front with the Soviet Union. We in India are directly affected by that reactionary policy. It seeks to prevent us from pulling our full weight in the war. But we cannot make that an excuse for ourselves adopting policies of negation and inaction. Our job is to fight them in order to strengthen the hands of the other progressive forces, to achieve victory of our common cause, and to end the slavery of our people

THEIR EMPIRE IS TOTTERING

We have to get away from the idea that British imperialism is invincible and all-powerful. It is not. This is truer today than it ever was. It has not only lost the gamble for world domination, but it is tottering. Not so much because of the blows of the rival imperialists but mainly because of the growing strength of the united front of the peoples which is fighting more and more determinedly for the annihilation of Hitler-fascism. The more decisively the people come forward everywhere to achieve this end, the more powerfully will the balance shift in favour of the people and against imperialism. This is the inevitable logic in this peoples' war. The idea that you could hold the imperialist government to ransom by withholding support to the war and then screw your demands out of it is born out of political bankruptcy, of complete lack of faith in the power of the people and of a slavish credulity in the invincibility of imperialism. The reality as it stands today is exactly the opposite.

That is why we say: Turn your face away from imperialist rulers. You can expect nothing from case-hardened reactionaries. Turn to your own people and to the progressive peoples of the world who are waging this war of liberation.

Seize initiative from imperialism. Forge national unity based mainly on an understanding, an agreement with the Muslim League, and on the cooperation with the workers' and peasants' organisations.

OUR PLAN OF ACTION

The Congress has to come out boldly rallying the people and uniting the various parties which stand for the freedom of the country on a programme of supporting and winning this peoples' war against the fascist aggressors. The Congress has to make its own the war and peace aims which the Soviet Union and the advanced sections of the British and the American peoples have set themselves. The Congress must declare: This is our war of liberation, which we Indian people have to take into our own hands to fight effectively and to win it in the interests of our own freedom and of the others. The Congress must take initiative in forging a joint front with the Muslim League and with the other popular parties and organisations on a platform of creating mass sanctions behind the peoples' demands for the immediate recognition of India's independence, for the setting up of a National Government at the Centre, commanding the confidence of the people, for establishment of democratic liberties. Having roused and rallied the entire country round these vital demands essential for winning the war for freedom, the Congress should then proceed to form joint ministries in the Provinces pledged to implement as far as lies in their full realisation, pledged to develop peoples' war effort, suppressing all coercion and compulsion, organising civil defence and popular guards relying on peoples' enthusiasm and initiative and pledged to economic measures to protect the people from the undue burdens of the war. If the Congress takes these steps and carries them out, basing itself fully on the unity and the support of the masses, it can transform the situation in the country. It will create such a mighty popular upsurge that no power on earth can stop it from realising its demands at the Centre, from marching straight to our liberation.

LESSONS OF RECENT HISTORY

Those who consider these proposals of ours as a surrender are themselves surrendering before the fear of the imaginary might of imperialism. Those who will persist in continuing policies of negation and inaction lack faith in the power of the masses and are blind to the world-shaking events that are undermining the very ground under the tyrants' thrones. Those who refuse the path of people's unity, people's action and initiative to seize power to win the war, to defend the country and to protect the people, are betraying the struggle for freedom at the most critical moment. To imagine that the British rulers will defend our country against foreign attack because they do not want to lose their empire is to forget the bitter lessons of recent history. The reactionary rulers of France gave up Paris to the enemy because they were more afraid of the revolutionary workers

defending Paris than of Hitler taking it! Quite recently, the American imperialists declared Manila an open city despite the angry protests of the Philippine population who wanted to defend the capital of their Motherland. But the American imperialists declared with an amazing callousness that the Philippines was to them “no longer an asset but a liability”. Yes, what is Motherland to the Philippines to be defended to the last drop of blood was now not an asset ‘but a liability’ to the slave-holders! This is how imperialists defend their empires and the people. There are some who say: What does it matter to us who are already slaves, if the British go and the Japanese come? Only imbeciles who are determined to remain slaves for ever can say that. Congressmen, however, are resolved not to be slaves of anybody, either the British or the Japanese imperialists. That is just the reason why they must stir themselves betimes and rouse the people to unity and action to take their destiny into their hands in the manner we suggest.

SUPPORT THE WAR FOR FREEDOM

Congressmen, Members of the A.I.C.C.! Remember the issue before you is not of violation of the Bombay resolution and to announce the waiting world that we stand where we stood. The plain fact is that you can no more stand where you stood. You have to move forward with your people, and at the head of them, to defend them to win freedom for them and for the world. The world is in flames. The Hitlerite criminals and their accomplices in the East are the main incendiaries today. They are the main enemies of mankind who have to be destroyed root and branch if the world is to advance to a durable peace and to real freedom. Humanity in arms, led by the Socialist Soviet people, by the Chinese people, and by the progressive forces everywhere, is at the job. *This requires your unequivocal support and whole-hearted cooperation to win this war and to win a peace based on the independence and democratic liberties of every nation and on their mutual and equal collaboration.* Those who are raising the fine point of hoary ethics—whether it is right to take to arms or not in defending the country in the present situation—are really side-tracking the real issue. They are seeking to divert the people back into the blind alley of negation and inaction. The issue before you is plain. It is to achieve the freedom of the country to defend the people and to adopt a practical policy for the same which the new world situation makes both urgent and possible.

AVERT DISASTER

If the Congress, which is the undoubted leader of the Indian people, comes forward with this decisive lead and the will to act, it can release such a powerful united national upsurge the like of which our country has never seen before. Remember it is the imperialist government which will shudder at the 100 per cent people’s cooperation in the war of liberation which will result out of this policy.

Before this extensive people's mobilisation, before this powerful mass countrywide activity, the rotten structure of bureaucratic government administration and of war effort must give way. Is it not a thousand times right that it should crumble right now under the determined blows of our own awakened people? History will never forgive us if we the Congress waited in sullen impotence till the rusty bureaucratic framework crashed at the touch of foreign attack, bringing disaster over the heads of our unprepared people. But this is exactly where the wooden-headed policy of the British reactionaries leads our country. This is the disaster you are called upon to avert.

FORWARD TO ACTION

The critical hour demands of us that we realise that today we can only further our struggle for freedom by positive people's action in the context of the people's war. It would be unworthy of us as a great people, unworthy of the traditions of our national struggle if we sat with folded hands and relied upon the British Government, upon the change of heart of imperialist rulers to unshackle us. The cause of world liberation which is being fought with unparalleled sacrifice and heroism on the battlefields of the Soviet Union and China and elsewhere, demands of us that we mobilise our people for that cause. That way lies our own liberation as well. We have to exert ourselves to smash the obstacle which hinders us from playing our rightful role in this battle for world freedom. With full faith in the glorious traditions of our movement, and relying on the inexhaustible strength of our people, let us march forward to take our place in the giant combat that is shaping the destiny of mankind and our own.

Communist Members of the A.I.C.C.

28. *Working Committee Instructions as finally approved at Wardha (January 15 to 16, 1942)*

WORKING COMMITTEE INSTRUCTIONS

Recent developments in the world situation have brought war near to India's frontiers. This may lead to internal dislocation in certain parts of the country and there is a possibility of some cities being subjected to aerial attack. Whatever dangers and difficulties might arise, the real antidote to them is to remain cool and collected and on no account to give way to nervousness and excitement. Congressmen must remain at their posts and continue their service of the people; wherever necessity arises they should yield places of safety to those in greater need and be ready to render aid to those who may require it.

The Congress can help and serve the people in the difficult times ahead only if

its organisation is strong and disciplined and Congressmen individually and Congress Committees are able to command confidence in their respective localities. Congress Committees and Congressmen should therefore address themselves immediately to the task of strengthening the organisation and reviving and maintaining contacts with the people in the villages and towns. Every village should, as far as possible, receive the message of the Congress and be prepared to face difficulties as might arise.

The constructive programme adopted by the Congress, and explained from time to time by Gandhiji, is of particular importance at this juncture. It is meant not only to bring about unity among various groups, to remove disabilities which keep sections of the community backward and depressed, to promote self-reliance and the cooperative spirit among the people, to increase production and have fairer distribution, but it also furnishes the best opportunity and means of contact with the people and service to them which are necessary for winning their confidence. The Working Committee therefore call upon Congress Committees and workers to further this programme intensively, and thus exercise a steadying and strengthening influence in times of dislocation and uneasiness.

During such times there is always a possibility of trouble being created by unsocial elements in the country. To avoid the emergence of such a situation and to meet it when it arises, volunteers should be organised in both the urban and rural areas. Such organisations should be formed on the basis of strict non-violence and it should always be remembered that the Congress adheres to this principle. These volunteers may cooperate with other organisations working for similar ends. This volunteer organisation is meant for rendering service to the people both normally and in the event of possible internal commotion. It should therefore avoid conflict with the authorities.

Prices of commodities have already risen and are causing distress among the people and no adequate steps have so far been taken by the authorities to meet this situation. These tendencies are likely to be accentuated in the future, and dislocation of trade and transport, due to stress of war, may lead to scarcity of the necessities of life as well as of many other things which are of everyday use. Big-scale industries in other countries have suffered heavily on account of the war and transport of goods has become difficult on account of military requirements. China has largely overcome these difficulties by a widespread development of village industries. India may have to face similar problems, and village and cottage industries afford a solution, desirable in itself, and more particularly suited to the needs of the moment. Such industries can escape to a large extent the effects of dislocation of trade and transport. It is therefore necessary that this item of the constructive programme should be widely taken up and worked with vigour and earnestness so that the countryside may be rendered, as far as possible, self-sufficient in regard to the necessities of life. The Committee would especially recommend to the villager the growing of food crops at least to cover the needs of the village and appeal to the grain dealers not to hold up stores for profit but to release them for consumption at fair prices.

In cases of emergency, when instructions are issued to the public by the authorities for the preservation of life and property and the maintenance of public order, Congressmen should avoid conflict with the authorities. They should carry out such instructions, unless they are contrary to Congress directions.

29. *A.I.C.C. Resolution endorsing the Working Committee Instructions issued at Bardoli for the guidance of Congressmen and Congress Committees*

This meeting of the A.I.C.C. endorses the following instructions issued by the Working Committee and calls upon all Provincial and other subordinate Committees to give effect to them within their respective areas. The Provincial Congress Committees are authorised to supplement them wherever necessary. The Committee expects every member of an elective Congress Committee to devote himself actively to the execution of some items of this programme, and to send periodical reports of the work done by him to his Committee.

Recent developments in the world situation have brought war near to India's frontiers. This may lead to internal dislocation in certain parts of the country and there is a possibility of some cities being subjected to aerial attack. Whatever dangers and difficulties might arise, the real antidote to them is to remain at their posts and continue their service to the people; wherever necessity arises they should yield places of safety to those in greater need and be ready to render aid to those who may require it.

The Congress can help and serve the people in the difficult times ahead only if its organisation is strong and disciplined and Congressmen individually and Congress Committees are able to command confidence in their respective localities. Congress Committees and Congressmen should therefore address themselves immediately to the task of strengthening the organisation and reviving and maintaining contacts with the people in the villages and towns. Every village should, as far as possible, receive the message of the Congress and be prepared to face such difficulties as might arise.

The constructive programme adopted by the Congress, and explained from time to time by Gandhiji, is of particular importance at this juncture. It is meant not only to bring about unity among various groups, to remove disabilities which keep sections of the community backward and depressed, to promote self-reliance and the cooperative spirit among the people, to increase production and have fairer distribution, but it also furnishes the best opportunity and means of contact with the people and service to them which are necessary for winning their confidence. The Working Committee therefore call upon Congress Committees and workers to further this programme intensively and thus exercise a steady and strengthening influence in times of dislocation and uneasiness.

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unsocial elements in the country. To avoid the emergence of such a situation and to meet it when it arises, volunteers should be organised in both the urban and rural areas. Such organisations should be formed on the basis of strict non-violence and it should always be remembered that the Congress adheres to this principle. These volunteers may cooperate with other organisations working for similar ends. This volunteer organisation is meant for rendering service to the people both normally and in the event of possible internal commotion. It should therefore avoid conflict with the authorities.

Prices of commodities have already risen and are causing distress among the people and no adequate steps have so far been taken by the authorities to meet this situation. These tendencies are likely to be accentuated in the future, and dislocation of trade and transport, due to stress of war, may lead to scarcity of the necessities of life as well as of many other things which are of everyday use. Big-scale industries in other countries have suffered heavily on account of the war and transport of goods has become difficult on account of military requirements. China has largely overcome these difficulties by a widespread development of village industries. India may have to face similar problems, and village and cottage industries afford a solution, desirable in itself, and more particularly suited to the needs of the moment. Such industries can escape to a large extent the effects of dislocation of trade and transport. It is therefore necessary that this item of the constructive programme should be widely taken up and worked with vigour and earnestness so that the countryside may be rendered, as far as possible, self-sufficient in regard to the necessities of life. The Committee would especially recommend to the villagers the growing of food crops at least to cover the need of the village and appeal to the grain dealers not to hold up stores for profit but to release them for consumption at fair prices.

In cases of emergency when instructions are issued to the public by the authorities for the preservation of life and property and the maintenance of public order, Congressmen should avoid conflict with the authorities. They should carry out such instructions, unless they are contrary to Congress directions.

30. *Charge of sabotaging Satyagraha—Gopala Reddy's reply to T. Prakasam*

Nellore

March 10, 1942

Mr. B. Gopala Reddy, M.L.A., in the course of a communication, writes: "When Mr. T. Prakasam found the Congress Legislative Party, at its meeting on 8th January 1942, gave overwhelming support to the Bardoli resolution on the Congress policy, he gave notice of a resolution to the A.I.C.C., alleging sabotage of Satyagraha that very evening. The President of the A.I.C.C. did not permit

him to move this resolution, either as a direct proposition or as an amendment to the official resolution, during the session of the A.I.C.C. on 15th and 16th January. But Mr. Prakasam took the opportunity of speaking, opposing the main resolution and introduced his pet subject of sabotage by indirect references. It appears, he wants to file a complaint against me before the Andhra Provincial Congress Working Committee.

"I will cheerfully face any enquiry that will be conducted by the Provincial Working Committee. President Prakasam seeks a sensation and he shall be offered one when I move my resolution of no confidence in him at the next P.C.C. meeting and my other two resolutions in the next Working Committee meeting."

31. *A.I.C.C. Resolution on the happenings in Lower Burma and consequent collapse of civil administration in Rangoon*

The Committee has noted recent extraordinary happenings in Burma and notably in the city of Rangoon, when though actual military operations were still some distance away, the whole civil administration suddenly collapsed and those in charge of it sought their own safety and abandoned their posts just when their presence was most needed. Private motor cars were commandeered for the evacuation of high officials and Europeans, leaving their owners stranded and unprovided for. The police force was discharged or withdrawn to other places, habitual and other criminals were released from prisons, and lunatics allowed to go out of their asylum. The city of Rangoon was thus left not only without any civil administration but at the mercy of lunatics, hardened criminals, and other anti-social elements. Even previously at the time of air-raids it had been evident that A.R.P. organisation did not function and no thought had been given to problem of organised evacuation, food supply or shelter. A situation was thus created which involved the citizens of Rangoon in utmost misery and desolation, and which was discreditable in extreme to the Government and its high officials.

As war approaches India, the lessons of Rangoon and Lower Burma are full of meaning for this country, for the same type of official wields authority here, and recent astonishing exhibition of panic and incompetence in Madras demonstrates dangers arising from inefficient and irresponsible officials, who have, in addition, no contacts with people of the country. Recent orders passed and circulars issued on behalf of various Provincial Governments indicate that they are obsessed with making provision for safety of higher civil officials and their removal from places of immediate danger. Little thought appears to have been given to drawing up of well prepared schemes for possible evacuation of a particular area and arrangement of transport, housing and food supply in a time of emergency. It is misfortune of India at this crisis in her history not only to have a foreign Government, but a Government which is incompetent and incapable of

organising her defence properly or of providing for safety and essential needs of her people. As no reliance can be placed on Central or Provincial Governments functioning in India to act effectively and intelligently in times of emergency, it becomes especial duty of people to rely upon and organise themselves for this purpose. The Congress programme of self-sufficiency and self-protection is essential foundation for self-reliance and avoidance, as far as possible, of many of the evils that follow in train of war. On this programme, therefore, the people must concentrate themselves. In larger cities where special problems arise schemes should be worked out with the help of experts in regard to food supply and other measures that may be necessary in times of emergency. In particular all panic should be avoided even though those in authority give way to it.

32. *Proceedings of a Press Conference held by Sir Stafford Cripps on 29 March 1942*

- Q: May I ask—in the statement which you have just read, you have mentioned the word “principal sections of the Indian people”, but in your introductory statement you have used the word “Indian peoples”. You have also used the same word “peoples” in the first declaration. Formerly the Viceroy has always said, “I speak on behalf of the Princes and people of India”. Would you kindly tell us whether there is any particular significance?
- A: We use both in the declaration. As I understand English the peoples of India and the Indian people are exactly the same. There is absolutely no particular significance. We recognise that the Indian subcontinent is peopled by more than one race. I believe the last sentence of paragraph I is almost a paraphrase of the Balfour Declaration.
- Q: Does the Statute of Westminster come into the picture as far as the determination of the Balfour Declaration is concerned?
- A: I will elucidate. The Statute of Westminster lays down a number of different Constitutions for different Dominions in accordance with the desires which those Dominions expressed. There is no such thing as a Statute of Westminster definition of a Dominion. The only question which arose as regards the Balfour Declaration as originally made in 1926 was a constitutional question which was argued by lawyers as to whether a Dominion had the legal right to secede from the Commonwealth. Long after that it was universally accepted as a fact, whatever the legal arguments may be, that the Dominions could secede. In this document, in order that there should be no possibility of doubt on that point, we have inserted in the last sentence of para (c)(ii) the statement “but will not impose any restriction on the power of the Indian Union to decide in future its relationship to other member States of the British Commonwealth”. It can decide to remain with them or part from them. The Dominion will be completely free either to

remain within or to go without the Commonwealth of Nations.

Q: May I ask what will be earliest possible time to realise the achievement of the new Indian Union?

A: Immediately after the termination of hostilities, not the end of the war. The provincial elections will be held and as soon as their results are known, the constitution-making body will be set up. We don't impose anything on India, not even a time limit.

Q: What about the Chief Commissioners' Provinces?

A: All the totality of the area which comes within British India will be represented in the constitution-making body consisting of Indians.

Q: In Delhi there is no legislature. What will happen to them? They won't be able to send their representatives?

A: If I may say so, it is perhaps a matter of detail which will be obviously decided later on.

Q: Will you please explain the idea of the Indian Union?

A: The idea of an Indian Union is to give a name to the new India which will have a constitution made by Indians, the form of which, we have a suspicion, will be some sort of a federal structure. It has no significance beyond a name for the new India.

Q: You call this a draft declaration. Are you likely to change the draft?

A: I have already, as I have said, made some changes in the draft. As far as I can see, the answer is no. I do not bind myself either to making changes or not making any changes. This is the changed draft.

We wish to create a new India with a wholly Indian Constitution framed by Indians and we have got to give it a name. The name we have given is Indian Union. In the political sense it is the Constitution of new India.

Q: Are you aware that the history of Britain is a history of broken pledges? Can you guarantee that these proposals will be implemented after war? Should not somebody like President Roosevelt guarantee them?

A: If you do not trust me there is no guarantee of anything—even that this thing is implemented. I am afraid you won't get President Roosevelt to guarantee it. As soon as the Constitution is settled everything will be transferred to India. If some Provinces decide not to accede then so far as they are concerned they will not be parties to the Constitution.

Q: What happens to the Indian Army?

A: So far as new India is concerned they can have the whole of the army and everything else.

Q: In para (a) you refer to "an elected body charged with the task of framing a new Constitution for India" and in (b) about the Indian States you only refer to participation. Does this mean that the people of the Indian States cannot be represented in the constitution-making body?

A: If there is in an Indian State a method of election, it may be used. If there is not, it will be by nomination.

All the Provinces will take part in the constitution-making body.

- Q: You have contemplated "such non-acceding Provinces". You contemplate more than a Province not agreeing to accede?
- A: The plural was intended to cover the singular.
- Q: Do you also contemplate, for example, a Province in the North not acceding and another Province in the South also not acceding trying to club together and to form a separate union?
- A: That would be impracticable. Two contiguous Provinces may form a separate union.
- Q: Are we agreed that till today the provincial boundaries in India have been arbitrarily fixed ever since the administration of the East India Company days?
- A: Arbitrarily, the answer is yes. Why should not this new union be allowed to fix the natural boundaries of these Provinces? Because you have got to take some existing undisputed area. If you have to settle the areas which can secede afterwards, the various communities will try to create areas in which their communities are in a majority and you will get no nearer a decision. The object of this scheme is to make a decision that self-government will no longer be held up by the British Government which in the past has been blamed for indecision as regards the method it has adopted.
- Q: Will there be any chance of a plebiscite?
- A: In any case where the result is not absolutely clear the suggestion has been made that it should be done by a plebiscite of the adult population. I have not accepted it. I proposed it. Democratically, the plebiscite is to ascertain the will of the population in a given area, if there is doubt whether the legislature reflects the opinion of the population.
- Q: Am I to understand that the plebiscite will be allowed to decide the fate of the whole country?
- A: No. It will be decided, in the case of a narrow difference of opinion, by plebiscite. Where quite obviously the legislative assembly has decided by a majority of 80 per cent to accede it won't be necessary to have a plebiscite. If 60 per cent of the legislature do not vote in favour of accession then the minorities shall have the right to challenge a plebiscite. Non-acceding Provinces shall be given the same status as the new Indian Union.
- Q: I referred to a particular area. In that area it happens that the northern portion is inhabited by a particular minority and the other area is inhabited by a separate community which is in a minority. Both the areas are predominantly one minority or the other. Will the plebiscite be for the whole population?
- A: The answer to a case of that kind would be, if there is the smallest amount of common sense amongst the Indians, there would be a rearrangement of boundaries as between the two Unions, and exchange of populations to get the larger majority in each.
- Q: Will it be obligatory upon a Province to decide either to accede or not to accede before the Province is permitted to send its representatives to the

Constituent Assembly?

- A: The process is completely different. All Provinces have got to send representatives to the Constituent Assembly. There will be discussions in that Constituent Assembly with everybody present and at the end of a period (say, during the course of a year) a Constitution will be framed. When it is finally, definitely framed all Provinces will be able to say "in spite of all our efforts to get what we wanted, fair treatment, in the Constituent Assembly we have failed. We do not, therefore, wish to accede." The legislature will then vote upon it. If there is a majority of less than 60 per cent the minority will demand that a plebiscite should decide.

If for a year in the constitution-making body the Indian communities meet together in order to forge a united Constitution for India they will probably succeed. If they do not, we can do nothing more to help them to succeed. If after having done that, some of them want to separate, nobody in the world can stop them.

- Q: Why should there be provision for non-acceding Provinces?

- A: I can assure you there are many other people in India who regard it an absolute necessity before they can agree.

- Q: Supposing there are two or three non-acceding Provinces, what is the procedure? Do you offer to them a new Dominion?

- A: Provided it is physically possible.

- Q: Do you propose to make each of those non-acceding Provinces into separate Dominions or a joint Dominion?

- A: We do not propose to do either. We propose to respond to the request of these Provinces which may be that they want separate Dominions or may be that they want one.

We want a positive vote for accession. As a matter of formal procedure in all Constitutions there is always a positive vote afterwards of the Union in order to confirm the decision which has been made by their representatives in the constitution-making body.

- Q: Why should you handicap those who are in favour?

- A: It does not handicap anybody at all.

It is a legitimate argument in the case of a large minority that the legislature does not truly reflect the actual forces of the different communities in the country. In order that there may be no possibility of doubt, or of anybody suggesting that anything unfair has been done, we want to fix something like a 2/5 or 3/5 majority. The plebiscite will be decided by a bare majority.

- Q: How are you going to find out whether the Indian States are going to accede?

- A: By asking them whether they wish to accede.

- Q: Will the people in the Indian States have any voice?

- A: That will be decided by the existing Governments whatever they are. I imagine in a sense if a State accedes to the new Indian Union there will be provision in the Constitution of the Indian Union—which will make it a

constituent of it—for a form of government in which the people have a voice.

We have got to deal with facts as they are. We cannot create Governments that are not there. The Indian States are governed by treaties. The treaties, so far as I know, with Britain will continue to exist unless somebody wants to alter them.

The Indian States, if they do not join in this Union, will remain in exactly the same situation as they are today.

There will be no maintenance of Imperial troops in this country unless it is at the request of and by agreement with one of the new Indian Unions.

The frontier is for the Indians to defend

If the Frontier Province of the Union or the Union to which it belongs asks us for some assistance we shall be prepared under agreement, as with any other country, to give that assistance. You cannot have freedom and also dependence upon an Imperial Power.

We offer it as a method by which there can be a united India governed by the Indians and we are not going any longer to take up the attitude that it is the British Government which is preventing this happening because they are relying upon differences between the Indians. We are no longer going to rely upon differences between Indians; we are, therefore, giving them a method by which they can solve their differences themselves.

Q: Are not Indians themselves competent to evolve a scheme on the basis of which they can unite?

A: Unfortunately our experience in the past ten years has been that Indians have not yet solved the problem or put forward a joint scheme for the giving of self-government to India.

Q: Exactly at what stage of this declaration does the Government propose to leave this country?

A: At the stage when the constitution-making body have decided upon the Constitution.

As soon as the constitution-making body has framed a new Constitution to take the place of the old one, the Government undertake to accept and implement the new one and the moment the new Constitution comes into operation the changeover takes place. We ask the Indians to do it.

Q: Supposing there are non-acceding Provinces which are not financially self-supporting, will H.M.G. finance or help them?

A: The British Government will not undertake financing of the new Dominion. They will have to decide before they decide not to accede whether, when they have not acceded, they can support themselves financially.

Q: Will the Indian Union have the right to take expropriation measures? Will there be no conditional reservation of British rights at all? It will have the same power as every other sovereign State?

A: We are not going to make any condition in the treaty as regards guaranteeing the vested rights of British interests in India.

Q: Don't you think there will be necessity for arbitration?

A: There may be reason for arbitration.

Q: Can we take it that the protection of racial minorities does not include the British vested interests?

A: It does not.

The treaty to be entered into will be between the constitution-making body and the British Government. It will be implemented and carried out by the self-governing Dominion of India.

Q: If India goes back on its obligations what will His Majesty's Government do?

A: The same action will be open to H.M.G. as is open to any Government, if there is a breach of treaty.

There are roughly two divisions of treaties with Indian States. One of them concerns paramountcy, one of them concerns economic matters. Whether the Indian States adhere or not, those economic matters will clearly have to be adjusted with the Indian Union and not with the British Government. So far as paramountcy is concerned, the paramountcy clause will not be interfered with unless at the request of any particular Indian State.

Q: If a Province or a State does not want to join will there be any procedure for settlement?

A: They will treat with another State in exactly the same way as they treat with all other powers, Japan, Siam, China, Burma, or any other country.

Q: What will be the procedure for non-acceding Provinces?

A: Exactly the same procedure will be gone through.

Q: Can the new Union secede from Britain? What is the meaning of the last sentence of (c) (ii)?

A: It means that the Indian Union will be absolutely free to decide its future relationship with other member States of the British Commonwealth one of which is Great Britain.

Q: Don't you think that the provision regarding non-acceding Provinces encourages separatism?

A: Do you appreciate that I am trying to get an agreement between the different communities in India and that in order to do so I cannot accept wholly the views of any one community.

Q: What will be the power reserved by the British?

A: There will be no power reserved at all, but there will be a treaty by which the Government of the Indian Union will undertake to carry on the protection which has been promised to those communities and if it fails it will be a breach of the treaty with the British Government.

Q: What will be the consequences of such a breach?

A: I am not going to say. It would be ridiculous and stupid for me to suppose what action might be taken in a particular instance.

Q: Do you at least contemplate what steps shall be taken to enforce the treaty?

A: The British Government will stick to its treaty and, if the other party does

not, they will take such steps as they consider suitable in the circumstances

Q: Is there any minimum number for Indian States to join the Union?

A: No.

Q: May I enquire whether in case Indian States do not join in the Indian Union and they remain allies to the Paramount Power, would the Paramount Power discharge its obligations to the Indian States, maintain Imperial troops under their treaty and, if so, would they maintain them on Indian soil or somewhere else?

A: They might maintain them by agreement in one of the States. They will not maintain them in the Indian Union. The treaty will cover all necessary matters— technical questions like the transfer of power in two or three months and the machinery of transfer.

The safeguards of services will be taken over by the British Government and there will be no safeguards for British vested interests.

Q: What is the minimum number of Provinces that will have to form the Union?

A: That will solve itself. The decisions of the constitution-making assembly will of course have to be passed by a majority. The Provinces who support the majority would be the theoretical minimum which could form the Union.

Q: Supposing some Provinces do not join the body making the Constitution?

A: They have got to. Every Province goes in. That is the last act of British India.

Q: Will the members of the Union have power to secede?

A: That is a matter for the Constitution which they frame. If they frame a Constitution which permits the members of the Constitution to secede, they will have the power; if they don't, they don't.

Q: May I know why it is not possible for the British Government to impose on the Indian States the obligation that they should also join the constitution-making body?

A: Because we have treaty rights with the Indian States and we could not do that without breach of our treaty rights. It is the desire of the British Government that all or as many of the States as possible should join.

Q: The question is whether it is not possible to lay down that—at least the question of acceding or seceding.

A: It is not possible to do that without agreement with the Indian States. We have not got the control over the Indian States we have over British India. Many suggestions will be made to the States.

Q: As a Socialist are you satisfied with the form of representation provided for the Indian States in the constitution-making body? [At this stage there was some local interruption on the propriety of the question.]

A: (I am accustomed to being heckled at meetings. I do not mind being heckled.) I have been asked whether as a Socialist I am satisfied with this scheme, particularly the part relating to the Indian States. My answer is that I am satisfied, from all the views that I have got, that this is the best possible solution of the Indian problem in order to give the maximum chance for the

creation of a united India.

Indian States will be invited to appoint representatives in the same proportion to their total population as in the case of representatives from British India as a whole and with the same powers as the British Indian members.

It does not contemplate any forced change in the Constitution of any Indian State. It contemplates that each Indian State will use the best method it has available of appointing people's representatives; if there is no other, it will be nomination by the ruler.

Q: What do you mean by the ruler of an Indian State?

A: I mean whatever recognised form of Government at present exists in that State. I am dealing with facts, not with wishes or hypotheses.

We set up in India an elected body and we say that you can add to that for the purpose of getting representation of the Indian States non-elected people.

Q: What will happen in the Centrally administered areas?

A: We shall have to make some arrangement as regards their representation. But that is, if I may say so, not one of the broad questions which we can go into here. The smaller States will obviously have to come together into groups.

Q: What do you mean by principal communities in (d)?

A: It means to say that you are going to reproduce in the constitution-making body exactly the same proportion of all the parties as we have in the first Houses of the Legislative Assembly—all the parties, not all the communities.

Q: What will be the constitution of the electoral college?

A: The electoral college consists of all the members of the Lower Houses of all the Provinces, about 1,581. They are the Provincial Assemblies which are elected under the existing Constitution.

Q: What do you mean by "immediately upon the results being known of provincial elections which will be necessary at the end of hostilities"?

A: It will be as soon as it can be organised after the cessation of hostilities.

Q: Can the Indian States change their Constitution?

A: Let me make an assumption that there is to be a new federal unit of India consisting of unit States. A Province will become a State. Some of the States may become States. The Constitution will lay down the form of Government both for the States and for the Federation. Whether these States of the new federal unit be former Provinces or former States, everybody will decide upon the Constitution for the whole. They will all share together in the whole Constitution.

Q: Why this solicitude of the British Government to get the Indian States into the Union?

A: That is the practical method of doing it under the existing facts. It is the only practical way.

Q: Can you define the words "principal communities"?

A: I cannot accurately define. Obviously, I may say, the principal communities

are the Hindus and the Muslims. If they do not reach an agreement and they come to H.M.G. saying "we have a better alternative" in which event we shall say: "We are delighted." We shall have to arrive at a decision as to whether they represent, broadly speaking, the majority of the Indian people or not.

Q: The States come into the constitution-making body. The Constitution is made. What will happen if some of the States do not accede?

A: The position will be they will revert to exactly the same position as they are in now. They may have to agree to economic adjustments. The Railways, Posts and Telegraphs will have to be with the new Indian Union.

Q: Your scheme contemplates Provincial Legislatures only. It does not bring in the Central Legislature. What is the position?

A: The people who are elected by proportional representation by the Provincial Legislatures need not necessarily be members of the Central Legislature but they must be people capable of being members.

Q: Can any revision be made of the provisions in the treaty after it has been concluded?

A: I imagine it would probably be a treaty for a term of years in the usual form to be continued for a further period unless either party wants to revise it. One party to a treaty cannot alter it without the consent of the other. If the other party does not agree, you have to go on with the existing treaty or go without any treaty at all.

Last para of the Proposals

Q: What exactly is meant by world war effort? Do I take it that what you imply thereby is that even during the interim arrangement the responsibility for the defence of India so far as it is Indian defence within the borders of India will be that of the Government of India, and that to the extent to which it is a part and parcel of the war in the world as a whole it will be the responsibility of the British Government?

A: I am afraid you can't divide the defence of any part of the front from any other part like that. It is all one. What this is intended to express is precisely the words that are here used. They are so self-explanatory that any elaboration of them is liable to mislead the people and not give any information. What it means to say is that on the question of defence, the British Government must be responsible and exercise control, but when it comes to the question of organising to the full the military, moral and material resources of India to take part in that defence, that must be the responsibility of the Government of India.

I cannot make the distinction clearer than that between these two functions. You would not be right in saying that it is a British-Indian responsibility.

The intention of this paragraph is to indicate to the Governor[-General] who is responsible for the formation of a Government in India, the broad

lines upon which, in accordance with the scheme, that Government might be formed. All the details of the formation are for the Governor-General and we have not attempted and should not attempt to take that responsibility out of his hands in any way. The particular part which is the guiding principle for the interim Government is paragraph (e), and the word "immediate" means starting as from the day after the acceptance of this scheme by the principal persons concerned and after my decision that there has been a sufficient generality of acceptance to enable H.M.G. to put the scheme into operation. "Effective" means not nominal but "real".

The counsels of the nation means primarily the Council of the Governor-General; the counsels of the Commonwealth means primarily the War Cabinet; and counsels of the United Nations means primarily the Pacific War Council.

The Provinces certainly come into the picture. The effective participation of the Provinces must depend upon the attitude which is taken up by the majority parties in the Provinces. There may be, on the other hand, some sharing of control in the Provinces or some new division of power for the purpose of the more effective carrying on of the Provincial Governments.

Q: I take it that it is your desire to stay on till arrangements themselves are worked out.

A: I shall if acceptance is given. I shall wait here until I can say definitely this is a settled scheme.

Q: Will it be proper to assume that His Excellency the Governor-General can, so to speak, Indianise the non-Indianised Departments at the Centre with the exception of Defence?

A: It is not obligatory on the part of the Governor-General. All we do is to give him a general direction. The object of the scheme is to give the fullest measure of government to the Indian people at the present time consistent with the possibilities of a Constitution which cannot be changed until the end of the war.

Q: What will be the position of the Central Legislature?

A: You cannot change the Constitution. All you can do is to change the conventions of the Constitution. You can turn the Executive Council into a Cabinet.

Q: What about the Service men?

A: I am not going to say anything specific. That is the job of the Governor-General and not of myself. All I can say is the general direction which has been laid down by the War Cabinet in this scheme.

The principle of the formation of the Government of India is in the rest of the paragraph. The leaders of the principal sections of the Indian people are to be invited to play their full and effective part which means to say that the intention of this document is as far as possible subject to the reservation of defence to put power into the hands of Indian leaders. The scheme goes through as a whole or is rejected as a whole. If it is rejected, I see no

opportunity of any formulation of any further scheme for India before the end of the war. (e) is a part of the scheme and depends upon the scheme going through.

Q: Who will be responsible for recruitment and training?

A: I am afraid I cannot answer that. I cannot answer details of this kind. It is for me to decide whether, after interviewing the Indian leaders, there is that general measure of acceptance which I consider necessary in order to promulgate the scheme.

It means that so far as one can, within the conventions of the existing Constitution, which you cannot alter, we shall attempt or the Governor-General will attempt to form in his Executive Council a body of Indian leaders who can give leadership to the country and who can help, as is said here, to direct the counsels of the country, and in London direct the counsellors of the War Cabinet and the Pacific War Council.

Q: Why should not the provisions regarding the non-acceding Provinces be left to the constitution-making body?

A: I wish I can easily and with just as much comfort to myself get over the matter without putting [in] anything about non-acceding. My object is to get people with different points of view to come to common agreement. We have considered it necessary to put it in.

Q: If it is the desire of major sections of Indian opinion that defence should be in Indian hands, would you be prepared to alter the clause?

A: If it is the desire of all the sections, I should be absolutely convinced it would be the worst thing for the defence of India. To disorganise the complete defensive arrangements of India at this moment would be fatal.

Q: You are inviting the cooperation of the major political parties to send their representatives to the Viceroy's Council?

A: It means exactly what is says. It means this: if the scheme is generally accepted, the Viceroy will call into consultation some of the leaders as to the best way to form a new Government which will give what is here stated as effective participation of the leaders of Indian opinion. If we remove from the defence of India the British Navy, the British Air Force and the British Army, how can we expect to defend British India? You appoint an Indian Defence Member. He won't have control of the British Navy, the British Air Force or the British Army. It is because of the history of what has gone before it is now impossible to change control at a critical moment.

Q: Would you consider joint responsibility for defence?

A: So far as this document is concerned, it contemplates joint responsibility. We are not bargaining. It is not a question of bargain. We have been blamed in the past for leaving it to the Indian leaders who could not agree to settle the future of India. We have accepted that challenge and if the Indian people wish to accept it it is open to their acceptance. Both parts must go together. The first with the second and the second with the first. One covers the period after the hostilities and the other covers the period until the end of the

hostilities.

Q: What will amount to an adequate measure of agreement?

A: I am not going to say anything about it. It is a matter entirely for myself to judge upon the whole of the discussions I have as regards an adequate measure of acceptance.

Q: Am I to understand that there will be no Indian as Defence Member even for internal defence of India?

A: You are not to understand that. You are to understand what is exactly catalogued in the first part and that which is catalogued in the second part. The first part is the responsibility of H.M.G.

Q: What would be the position as regards the internal defence of India, whether at any time it can go to an Indian Defence Minister? What would be the position of the Commander-in-Chief?

A: The fallacy, if I may say so with respect, in your question is to speak of the internal control of the defence of India. There isn't such a thing. It just doesn't exist. Civil defence is a completely different proposition altogether. Internal security is another matter altogether. It is not a question that generally comes under defence. It may be in the normal state of affairs when there is not a war raging not only all over the world but on your frontiers.

Let me take a purely hypothetical case.

Let me assume that the movement of troops is required from Madras to Calcutta. That you would say is a purely internal matter. The question as to whether those troops are to be moved will depend on a very large number of external matters. The Japanese are likely to attack Ceylon: the position in Burma, the placing of the fleet, both the American and the British, in the Pacific waters and a multitude of other questions. Whether there are other troops available to be moved from other points like the Middle East, England, South Africa, etc. to put [in place of] the troops that are required to be in Calcutta. When there is a state of war you cannot dissociate the internal movement of troops from the general strategy and tactics of the war. If you could, it would be a perfectly simple thing to let the Indians manage the internal defence of India. If in the existing circumstances we were to placate Indian opinion we should be false to our duty. We should be merely destroying the effective defence of India. So long as a large portion of the effective air force, navy and army have to be from British or other Dominion sources or America or wherever it may be, it is essential that the control of the movement of all those forces should be under a centralised body. They are today, through the Commander-in-Chief, under the control of the Chiefs of Staff who get their directions from the War Cabinet. Now, in order to overcome that difficulty, and to make it clear that we want Indians to participate in every way in their defence, we are asking them to appoint a member to the War Cabinet, just as Australia has a member on the War Cabinet, where all these questions are discussed and decided as regards strategy in the Pacific, or in the Pacific War Council. So we ask the Indians

to play their part by full membership in the War Cabinet in deciding those questions. They are questions which could, in no circumstances be decided by an Indian Defence Minister, when there is a state of war.

As regards other matters, the matters which are dealt with in organising to the full the military and material resources of India, that is a different proposition. That we say we do want the Government of India to do. We want the Government of India to be fully Indianised.

[Somebody cited the case of Australia.]

Q: Who is going to give the Commander-in-Chief his orders?

A: The War Cabinet. It would be dishonest to say that the Indian Defence Minister was responsible for defence.

(As regards the British units in this country they would remain under British control. It would be the Indian units which would be under Indian control.) (The position in Australia today is that the whole are under American control.)

There are two different kinds of control of forces. There is the Technical military control. And there is the ultimate political control. What we are really debating upon is political control. Supposing we send forces to Russia, let me say to take a foreign country, those forces will not be under the political control of Russia; they may come under the operational control of Russia. The same way, politically the British forces in India must in any event continue to be controlled by the War Cabinet in London.

If you had had in India a system going on for a longer period of time (as there is in Australia) under which there was such a dyarchy, it is possible to meet the conditions of war. One thing is quite certain. If you create those conditions in a moment of crisis you will only create confusion and inefficiency and lack of defence.

Finance and Communications are matters which will be under the Government of India.

Q: Is there going to be any variation in the financial side (regarding army)?

A: It does not mean an alteration of the present system under which we bear a large measure of the responsibility and India bears a measure of responsibility also. For the British units given to India we bear the responsibility for them and you bear certain responsibilities for certain Indian units. That division of financial responsibility will not be varied under this system.

Q: Would following the scorched earth policy be the concern of the Government of India?

A: I cannot decide here and now upon particular items. It is not a broad question. If you know, it includes a thousand and one things. It includes the question of movement of factories, movement of population, burning of farms and thousand and one different items, which would all probably fall under different Ministers.

India will be represented at the Peace Conference.

The British War Cabinet are not going to appoint anybody to the War Cabinet. They are going to ask the new Indian Government to appoint someone they consider suitable.

Q: Now that this declaration has been made is there any difficulty in the way of India participating in the Atlantic Charter?

A: None at all.

Q: By what date you expect to leave India?

A: I expect to leave on the date on which I said I would leave.

I have tried as far as I can to give you explanations of the points that you have raised. I know some of you may have views opposite to the views which I have expressed and I am not in the least asking you in any way naturally to suppress those views. But I hope, if you are going to express those views, you will also find it possible to express some of the views which I have given as well so that you do not present an entirely one-sided case, whether it is my case or whether it is your case. We want the Indian people who have got to judge to have a fair basis on which to form their judgment.

33 *Gandhiji's draft of the resolution on British War Cabinet's proposals for the Allahabad meeting of the Congress Working Committee*

Sevagram

April 23, 1942

Whereas the British War Cabinet's proposals sponsored by Sir Stafford Cripps have shown up British imperialism in its nakedness as never before, the A.I.C.C. has come to the following conclusion:

The A.I.C.C. is of opinion that Britain is incapable of defending India. It is natural that whatever she does is for her own defence. There is an eternal conflict between Indian and British interests. It follows that their notions of defence would also differ. The British Government has no trust in India's political parties. The Indian army has been maintained up till now mainly to hold India in subjugation. It has been completely segregated from the general population who can in no sense regard it as their own. This policy of mistrust still continues and is the reason why national defence is not entrusted to India's elected representatives.

Japan's quarrel is not with India. She is warring against the British Empire. India's participation in the war has not been with the consent of the representatives of the Indian people. It was purely a British act. If India were freed her first step would probably be to negotiate with Japan. The Congress is of opinion that if the British withdrew from India, India would be able to defend herself in the event of Japanese or any aggressor attacking India.

The A.I.C.C. is, therefore, of opinion that the British should withdraw from

India. The plea that they should remain in India for protecting the Indian Princes is wholly untenable. It is additional proof of their determination to maintain their hold over India. The Princes need have no fear from unarmed India.

The question of majority and minority is a creation of the British Government and would disappear on their withdrawal. For all these reasons the Committee appeals to Britain, for the sake of her own safety, for the sake of India's safety, and for the cause of world peace to let go her hold on India even if she does not give up all Asiatic and African possessions.

This Committee desires to assure the Japanese Government and people that India bears no enmity either towards Japan or towards any other nation. India only desires freedom from all alien domination. But in this fight for her freedom, the Committee is of opinion that India, while welcoming universal sympathy, does not stand in need of foreign military aid. India will attain her freedom through her non-violent strength and will retain it likewise. Therefore the Committee hopes that Japan will not have any designs on India. But if Japan attacks India and Britain makes no response to its appeal, the Committee would expect all those who look to Congress for guidance to offer complete non-violent non-cooperation to the Japanese forces and not render any assistance to them. It is no part of the duty of those who are attacked to render any assistance to the attacker. It is their duty to offer complete non-cooperation.

It is not difficult to understand the simple principles of non-violent non-cooperation.

1. We may not bend the knee to the aggressor nor obey any of his orders.
2. We may not look to him for any favours nor fall to his bribes. But we may not bear him any malice nor wish him ill.
3. If he wishes to take possession of our fields we will refuse to give them up even if we have to die in the effort to resist him.
4. If he is attacked by disease or is dying of thirst and seeks our aid we may not refuse it.
5. In such places where the British and Japanese forces are fighting our non-cooperation will be fruitless and unnecessary. At present our non-cooperation with the British Government is limited. Were we to offer them complete non-cooperation when they are actually fighting, it would be tantamount to placing our country deliberately in Japanese hands. Therefore not to put any obstacle in the way of the British forces will often be the only way of demonstrating our non-cooperation with the Japanese. Neither may we assist the British in any active manner. If we can judge from their recent attitude, the British Government do not need any help from us beyond our non-interference. They desire our help only as slaves—a position we can never accept.

It is necessary for the Committee to make a clear declaration in regard to the scorched earth policy. If, in spite of our non-violent resistance, any part of the country falls into Japanese hands we may not destroy our crops, water-supply

etc., if only because it will be our endeavour to regain them. The destruction of war material is another matter and may under certain circumstances be a military necessity. But it can never be the Congress policy to destroy what belongs to or is of use to the masses.

Whilst non-cooperation against the Japanese forces will necessarily be limited to a comparatively small number and must succeed if it is complete and genuine, the true building up of Swaraj consists in the millions of India whole-heartedly working the constructive programme. Without it the whole nation cannot rise from its age-long torpor. Whether the British remain or not, it is our duty always to wipe out unemployment, to bridge the gulf between rich and poor, to banish communal strife, to exercise the demon of untouchability, to reform dacoits and save the people from them. If crores of people do not take a living interest in this nation-building work, freedom must remain a dream and unattainable by either non-violence or violence.

FOREIGN SOLDIERS

The A.I.C.C. is of opinion that it is harmful to India's interests and dangerous to the cause of India's freedom to introduce foreign soldiers in India. It, therefore, appeals to the British Government to remove these foreign legions and henceforth stop further introduction. It is a crying shame to bring foreign troops in spite of India's inexhaustible manpower and is a proof of the immorality that British imperialism is.

34. *A note from Dr. Prafulla Chandra Ghosh*

C28 College Street Market
Calcutta
April 24, 1942

Altogether about 1½ lacs of people have been evacuated from different districts of Bengal:

Noakhali	75 thousand, of which 70 thousand are from Feni (Sub-division)
Chittagong	25 thousand
Tippera	20 thousand
Jessore	10 thousand
Diamond Harbour	10 thousand
Behala	5 thousand
Khulna	5 thousand

After these figures were compiled, four more villages in Feni Sub-division and nine villages in Tippera have been evacuated. In new areas of Chittagong, I am informed, order for evacuation has been passed but no details are yet available.

In Behala, the order of evacuation was announced by loudspeaker at 10 p.m. on the 1st of April and people were asked to evacuate by the 2nd April. The Government made no arrangements for their evacuation nor paid any cost of removal. Behala Municipality helped the people as much as they could.

In Chittagong, 3 days' notice was given and the local authorities helped the people in removing their belongings to the new places of shelter.

In Noakhali and Tippera, practically 48 hours' notice was given. The Government did not help them in removing their belongings. Cost of removal was given at the rate of Rs.10 for those paying no Chowkidari tax (union rate) and then the amount paid varied according to the union rate paid by the evacuee, maximum being Rs.100 for those who paid more than Rs.10 per annum as the union rate. Number of such persons does not exceed one in a thousand. The average amount paid may be about Rs.20 per family.

In Diamond Harbour, no cost of removal was at first given. The Congress President of the place met the Bengal Minister and about a thousand evacuees came to the Bengal Secretariat and as a result Rs.5 to Rs.25 was given as advance payment for compensation which includes cost of removal.

Largest number of people has been evacuated from Feni Sub-division of Noakhali. The people had practically to carry their belongings on their head. In some of the villages where they have taken shelter there has been great congestion. They are suffering from insufficiency of drinking and bathing water. The Government has yet given no money for construction of huts. People have been asked to construct huts and then apply for cost. Poor people will not be able to build huts at all. In Tippera several families were actually living under trees for some days when through the intervention of the District Congress Committee some arrangement has been made for their temporary shelter. In Feni some people had to evacuate twice, but no cost of removal was given for the second evacuation. Due to shortness of time, people have not been able to remove paddy straw which is used for cattle fodder.

The most outrageous order passed was that in Midnapur where boats of certain sizes were asked to be removed to a certain place by giving only 3 hours' notice. For non-compliance, due to shortness of notice, several boats have been destroyed or burnt. S.D.O., Contai, has admitted destruction of some boats in a printed leaflet and promised compensation. Cases of intimidation, zulum, extortion etc. by the police have also been reported.

Boats and bicycles are being registered in coastal districts. Boats of certain sizes in Chittagong have also been asked to be removed to certain places in Tippera. These orders are being passed lest these boats etc. [should] fall into the hands of the Japanese. In the countryside these orders have created a feeling among the people that the Government is incapable of protecting them from Japanese aggression.

Certain districts [such as] Dacca do not produce sufficient paddy. Dacca brings paddy from Barisal and Khulna mainly by boat. If these boats are commandeered there is bound to be serious consequences including food riots. In Comilla town bicycles are being seized. The first bicycle seized was that of Dr. Nripendra Nath Basu, Secretary, District Congress Committee, and a medical practitioner.

EXCESSES COMMITTED BY SOLDIERS

In Chanua, a village in Feni Sub-division, two people died and two were seriously wounded by the firing of the military on the 16th last. One of the wounded persons has since then died in the hospital. It is reported that some soldiers tried to assault a woman. Hearing her cries, villagers assembled. There was a scuffle and the soldiers fired, with the result mentioned above. Several soldiers have been arrested over the incident. There has been a report of criminal assault on women as well as looting by soldiers. The additional S.D.O., Feni, in a printed handbill issued to the local people, has admitted death due to firing by military.

35. *Statement issued by Abul Kalam Azad on 25 April 1942 on a Resolution passed by the Madras Congress Legislature Party*

Calcutta
April 25, 1942

It greatly astonished and pained me that a man like Mr. Rajagopalachari in spite of his being a member of the Congress Working Committee should have adopted such an attitude. I am in communication with him. I would assure you that any personal relationship, howsoever dear to me, cannot deter me for a moment from discharging my duty as a President of the Congress.

I may point out in this connection that in the Congress organisation only the Provincial Congress Committee is the competent body to represent provincial views—not the Congress Legislature Party. Despite this fact the Party itself was not fully represented in the meeting. The information about the meeting indicates that out of 191 Congress members of both the Houses, only 52 attended the meeting. And when votes were taken only 36 participated in the voting. It clearly shows that it would be wrong to attribute the decision to the majority of the Congressmen of the Province.

36. *Statement issued by Abul Kalam Azad on 25 April 1942 on the question whether it was desirable for Provincial and other Congress Committees to function at a time when most of the members of such Committees were out of jail*

Letters have been received from some Provinces asking whether in view of the fact that most of the members of the Provincial and other Congress Committees are out of jail, it is desirable for the Committees to function

It seems that these Committees have not grasped the real position in this respect. The constitution was never suspended during the last 15 months. The Committees formed after the last election did not cease to function, and there is no reason why their normal activities should not continue. The situation in the beginning of the present struggle was that the Congress had asked the members of the Committees to offer Satyagraha. And when all or most of the members were arrested, Gandhiji instructed them not to fill the vacancies thus caused, and the offices were put in charge of an organiser during the state of emergency. It did not, however, mean the suspension of the Committees. Now, when all the members of the Committees have come out of the jails, there is no reason why the Committees should not function as before.

37. *Statement issued to the Press by Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Vallabhbhai Patel, J.B. Kripalani, and Dr. Prafulla Chandra Ghosh on 25 April 1942*

The following statement has been issued to the press by Babu Rajendra Prasad, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Acharya J.B. Kripalani and Dr. Prafulla Ghosh:

IN HIS LETTER ADDRESSED TO THE MAULANA SAHEB ON DECEMBER 30TH GANDHIJI MENTIONED THAT MOST OF THE MEMBERS OF THE CONGRESS WORKING COMMITTEE DIFFERED FROM HIS INTERPRETATION OF THE BOMBAY RESOLUTION STOP THIS IS A FACT AND THE BARDOLI DELIBERATIONS HAVE CLEARED THE POSITION STOP GANDHIJI IN A STATEMENT TO THE PRESS MADE SOON AFTER THE PASSING OF THE RESOLUTION OF THE WORKING COMMITTEE HAS ALSO POINTED OUT THAT THERE ARE THREE SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT ON THE ISSUE OF WAR STOP HE HAS MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE RESOLUTION LEAVES THE SCHOOL STANDING OUT FOR NON-PARTICIPATION PREDOMINANTLY ON THE GROUND OF NON-VIOLENCE FREE NOT ONLY SUBQUOTE TO HOLD THAT OPINION BUT TO PROPAGATE IT FOR THE ACCEPTANCE OF ANYBODY WHO CHOOSES SUBUNQUOTE PARA WE THE SIGNATORIES TO THIS STATEMENT REPRESENT THIS SCHOOL OF THOUGHT STOP WHATEVER MAY BE THE INTERPRETATION OF THE BOMBAY RESOLUTION THE CONDITION OF THE COUNTRY INVOLVED IN THE WAR LEAVES NO DOUBT WHATSOEVER IN OUR MIND TODAY THAT IT WOULD BE NOTHING SHORT OF A CALAMITY FOR THE CONGRESS TO ABANDON NON-VIOLENCE ON ANY ACCOUNT STOP FOR BY DOING SO WE LOSE EVERYTHING INCLUDING WHAT WE HAVE ACHIEVED FOR THE LAST TWENTY YEARS STOP

PARA THE QUESTION THEN NATURALLY ARISES WHY HOLDING THE VIEW WE DO WE REFRAINED FROM ASSERTING OURSELVES AND RESIGNING FROM THE WORKING COMMITTEE STOP THIS WE DID BECAUSE MOST OF US SIGNATORIES HAD IN OUR REPRESENTATIVE CAPACITY GONE BY THE INTERPRETATION OF THE BOMBAY RESOLUTION NOT ACCEPTED BY GANDHIJI STOP WE AS INDIVIDUALS HOWEVER ARE BELIEVERS IN OUT AND OUT NON-VIOLENCE STOP OUR COLLEAGUES KNOW OUR VIEW STOP THEY HAVE LEFT US FREE TO HOLD AND PROPAGATE IT STOP NON-VIOLENCE AS THE OFFICIAL POLICY OF THE CONGRESS HOLDS EVEN TODAY STOP THE WORKING COMMITTEE RESOLUTION CONTEMPLATES ASSOCIATION IN THE PRESENT WAR IN THE REMOTE CONTINGENCY OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT MAKING AN OFFER ACCEPTABLE TO THE CONGRESS STOP IF THAT HAPPENS WE CANNOT OF COURSE REMAIN IN THE WORKING COMMITTEE

THE AICC WILL SOON MEET STOP ORDINARILY THE AICC IS EXPECTED TO ENDORSE WORKING COMMITTEE RESOLUTION STOP WE THINK THERE IS OR SHOULD BE NO SUCH CONVENTION IN THIS CASE WHERE THERE ARE SHARP DIVISIONS OF OPINION STOP EVERY MEMBER IS EXPECTED TO USE HIS INDEPENDENT JUDGMENT AND MAKE HIS CHOICE IRRESPECTIVE OF PARTY LOYALTY STOP THERE SHOULD BE NO UNTHINKING IMITATION STOP WE FEEL THAT THE WORKING COMMITTEE WILL WELCOME REJECTION OF ITS RESOLUTION IF THE AICC HOLDS THAT THE CONTEMPLATED ABANDONMENT OF NON-VIOLENCE IS AGAINST THE INTERESTS OF THE COUNTRY AND THEREFORE THE CONGRESS PRINCIPALLY ON THAT GROUND SHOULD NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE WAR EFFORT STOP ON THE OTHER HAND IF THE MEMBERS HAVE THE CONVICTION THAT THE INTERESTS OF THE COUNTRY DEMAND SUCH PARTICIPATION THEY SHOULD WHOLE-HEARTEDLY SUPPORT THE WORKING COMMITTEE RESOLUTION

38. *Statement issued by the Congress Socialist Party on 25 April 1942*

In spite of the recent release of political prisoners, the National Executive of the Congress Socialist Party is meeting with attenuated ranks. Many of our leaders including Comrades Jayaprakash Narayan, Yusuf Meherally, Ahmed Din, Achyut Patwardhan, Rammanohar Lohia, Satyavati, Mohanlal Gautam, Damodar Swarup Seth are not out of prison. Over two-thirds of the Congress Socialist Members of the A.I.C.C. are still in jail.

The Committee has given earnest consideration to the resolution passed by the Working Committee of the Congress at Bardoli. The different interpretations that have been offered of it and the general reactions to it in this country and outside make it necessary for the Party to express its attitude.

The most important and significant observation has been made by Gandhiji who has pointed out that "the Congress has now, through the Working Committee, made it clear that the door is not barred altogether against Congress participation" in the war. Gandhiji and a section of the Working Committee dissociated themselves from this resolution because of their opposition to participation in the war mainly on the ground of non-violence.

This Committee expresses its abhorrence of war and violence but realising that wars are inevitable in a society based on exploitation, the Party has been striving, to the measure of its strength, to remove the root causes of such rivalries and conflicts. But its opposition to the war is based fundamentally on political grounds.

The Congress Socialist Party has consistently, since its inception, held the view that India's participation in Britain's war would never take her to her goal of independence. Even a free India may not necessarily plunge into the vortex of war, but to pledge Indian participation, as a price for obtaining political rights, would be the greatest disservice to the Indian people. The development of the war and the attitude of the British Government to Indian aspirations have abundantly vindicated the position of the Party. The war has remained imperialist. It is further highly unrealistic, and often dangerously misleading, to translate our undoubted sympathy into an offer of support to the countries that are victims of aggression when we have not succeeded in asserting our full freedom.

The Congress participation in the war, if and when the Government, in the words of Gandhiji, "unlocks the door", will mean the break-away of some of its influential sections, will weaken the Congress materially, and further endanger the Congress position that would already be jeopardised by the Congress involvement in the war. It is, therefore, necessary for the Congress to remain rooted to a policy of unflinching opposition to the war. It also needs to accommodate, as in our opinion the Bombay A.I.C.C. resolution did, both who oppose the war on political grounds and on non-violence. To separate these two strands which are inextricably woven in the fabric of the Congress as it has developed in the last 20 years will irretrievably weaken the Congress in the grave situation we are now facing.

The consistent refusal of the British Government to agree to freedom for India, even in the war crisis, the many attempts to divide and disunite the Indian people and the repeated humiliations offered to nationalist India have finally extinguished all hopes of the Government divesting itself of its power over India. This Government, caught in coils of the logic of its being, is increasingly betraying its inability to defend the interests of the Indian people. Such defence as it puts up will only be for the purpose of securing a stronger hold over this country. The time has now come for the Indian people to depend on their resources and organised strength to preserve the integrity and independence of India.

This Committee appreciates the Working Committee's decision to organise volunteer brigades but feels the need for revision of its appeal and approach. It is necessary to mobilise the Indian people for the purpose of defending the country. The volunteers should be called upon, not to be an auxiliary A.R.P. or Civic Guards organisation, but a disciplined body in intimate contact with the people, with the responsibility of organising and directing the people in the emergencies that are bound to arise to safeguard and secure India's freedom.

There is also a growing need for developing in the country a National Authority competent to watch the interests of the people. The Committee is of the opinion that the time is now opportune for the Congress to convene the Constituent Assembly. The election of such an Assembly, rising in tier over tier from village meeting of all adult citizens to the All India National Authority will create in the country both the atmosphere and the sanction necessary for asserting India's rights in a changing world.

39. Draft Resolution prepared by Congress Working Committee at Allahabad on 27 April 1942 on British War Cabinet's proposals

Whereas the British War Cabinet's proposals sponsored by Sir Stafford Cripps have shown up British imperialism in its nakedness once again, the A.I.C.C. has come to the following conclusions:

There is an eternal conflict between Indian and British interests. It is natural that whatever Britain does is for her own defence. British and Indian notions of defence would also differ. The British Government has no trust in India's political parties. The Indian army has been maintained up till now mainly to hold India in subjection. It has been completely segregated from the general population who can in no sense regard it as their own. This policy of distrust still continues and is the reason why national defence is not entrusted to India's elected representatives, and India rendered incapable of defending herself.

India's participation in the war has not been with the consent of the representatives of the Indian people. It was purely a British act. If India were free she would wish to keep out of the war, her sympathies with victims of aggression notwithstanding. India would know also how to defend herself in the event of Japanese or any aggressor attacking India.

Great Britain should, therefore, for the sake of her own safety, for the sake of India's safety, and for the cause of world peace let go her hold on India.

India bears no enmity towards any foreign nation. India only desires freedom from all alien domination. In her fight for freedom the Committee is of opinion that India, while welcoming universal sympathy, does not stand in need of foreign military aid. Her past experience teaches her that it is harmful to India's interests and dangerous to the cause of India's freedom to introduce foreign soldiers in India. There is inexhaustible manpower in India which remains untapped on account of the policy of distrust of the Indian people by the British Government; she resents this treatment of her people.

India will attain her freedom through her own strength and will retain it likewise. She has no quarrel with any other nation. But if in spite of this any nation attacks India, the Committee would expect all those who look to Congress guidance to offer complete non-violent non-cooperation to the inwarding forces and not render any assistance to them.

We may not bend the knee to the aggressor nor obey any of his orders. We may not look to him for any favours nor fall to his bribes. But we may not bear him any malice nor wish him ill. If he wishes to take possession of our homes and our fields we will refuse to give them up even if we have to die in the effort to resist him. If he is attacked by disease or is dying of thirst and seeks our aid we may not refuse it.

In places where the British and Japanese or other inwarding forces are fighting, our non-cooperation will be fruitless and unnecessary. Not to put any obstacle in the way of the British forces will often be the only way of demonstrating our non-cooperation with the inwarder. Judging from their attitude, the British Government do not need any help from us beyond our non-interference. They desire our help only as slaves—a position we can never accept.

If, in spite of our non-violent resistance, any part of the country falls into inwarder's hands we may not destroy our crops, water-supply, etc., if only because it will be our endeavour to regain them. The destruction of war material is another matter and may under certain circumstances be a military necessity. But it can never be the Congress policy to destroy what belongs to or is of use to the masses.

Direct non-cooperation against any inwarding forces will necessarily be limited. Its complete and lasting success as also the true building up of Swaraj depend on the millions of India whole-heartedly working the constructive programme. Without it the whole nation cannot rise from its age-long torpor. Whether the British remain or not it is our duty always to wipe out unemployment, to bridge the gulf between rich and poor, to banish communal strife, to exercise the demon of untouchability, and protect the people from antisocial elements. If crores of people do not take a living interest in this nation-building work, freedom in terms of the masses must remain a dream and unattainable by either non-violence or violence.

40. *A.I.C.C. Resolution on evacuation of certain areas and behaviour of soldiers, as adopted on 28 April 1942*

The attention of the All India Congress Committee has been drawn to a variety of orders passed by Government or military authorities for evacuation of certain areas in the country. Such evacuation is often necessary in times of war for reasons of military necessity or safety of population in a particular area. But it is the recognised practice that no such orders should be passed, except in cases of sudden and extreme urgency, without making suitable arrangements and without even giving reason and sufficient time to people concerned to do so and, in any event, without every facility of transport and adequate compensation. It appears that no such facilities have been provided and in many cases no compensation or totally inadequate compensation has been given. Some orders

have demanded evacuation from an area within 24 hours, thus making it impossible for families to do anything but to walk out, camp under the trees, become destitute and starve. No Government worth the name should allow this to happen, and even from military point of view such happenings are highly undesirable as they lead to widespread resentment among the people.

The Committee has also noted with dismay that frequent and well authenticated reports have been received of molestation of women by soldiers in railway trains and evacuated and other places. These have already led to disastrous consequences including the shooting of people who resisted in some places and there is growing and widespread feeling of deep resentment, especially at the inability of any authority to take effective measures to prevent these happenings or to punish the culprits. The civil authority appears to be powerless and the military authority disinclined to intervene. The Committee trusts that immediate steps will be taken to check and put an end to this molestation which must be resisted by the people at all costs.

41. *Resolution of the All India Congress Committee on Evacuees and Refugees from Malaya and Burma passed at its Allahabad Session (April 29 to May 2, 1942)*

The All India Congress Committee has noted with indignation the arrangements made for, and the treatment accorded to, evacuees and refugees from Malaya and Burma to India. The officials, whose business and duty it was to protect the lives and interests of the people in their respective areas, utterly failed to discharge that responsibility and, running away from their post of duty, sought safety for themselves, leaving the vast majority of the people wholly uncared and unprovided for. Such arrangements for evacuation as were made were meant principally for the European population and at every step racial discrimination was in evidence. Because of this and also because of the utter incompetence, callousness and selfishness of those in authority, vast numbers of Indians in Malaya and Burma have not only lost all they possessed but have also undergone unimaginable sufferings, many dying on the way from lack of the necessities of life, from disease, or from attacks from anti-social elements.

Racial discrimination was shown at the base camps in Burma where special arrangements were made for Europeans and Anglo-Burmans while Indians were left almost uncared for; in the according of special facilities for transport and travel to the Europeans and Eurasians; and in the general treatment given to Indians and non-Indians along the routes and at the various camps. In particular, this was in evidence in the scandal of a safer and more convenient route being practically reserved for non-Indians, while Indians were forced to travel by a longer, more difficult and more dangerous route.

The Committee is aware that recently some alterations have been made in these

arrangements and that Indians are now being brought over by air from Myitkyina, and can also avail themselves of the safer land route in limited numbers. The treatment of the evacuees and refugees on the Indian side of the border, though somewhat better now, is still far from satisfactory. But from all reports the conditions at the base camps for evacuees in Burma are highly unsatisfactory and the worst sufferers there are Indians. The Committee calls upon the Government of India to make all necessary arrangements for the speedy evacuation from the unoccupied zone in Burma of all Indians who wish to be so evacuated. Suitable Indians, official and non-official, should be appointed to supervise and look after the interests of Indians in the base and other evacuation camps and on all routes used by evacuees. The Committee trusts that non-official relief agencies will be permitted to send workers and doctors all along the Manipur route from Dimapur to Tamu and beyond to the base camp on the Burma side, as well as to Myitkyina, which is the air base for refugees.

The problem of the evacuees and refugees from Burma is not solved by merely bringing them to India. Every effort should be made to find suitable work for them in existing establishments or on the land, or regular semi-permanent camps should be started where productive work for wages is organised.

The Committee expresses its appreciation of the fine service rendered to the evacuees by various non-official relief organisations and by their voluntary workers. The Committee calls upon the Indian public to extend all possible help to the evacuees, and particularly all employers to provide employment for as many of them as possible. The Committee also extends its warm welcome to all those Indians who have returned to the homeland in these distressing circumstances and assures them of its deep sympathy and anxious interest in their cause.

42. *A.I.C.C. Resolution passed at Allahabad on 1 May 1942, declaring the policy India was to adopt in the event of foreign invasion*

In view of the imminent peril of invasion that confronts India, and the attitude of the British Government, as shown again in the recent proposals sponsored by Sir Stafford Cripps, the All India Congress Committee has to declare afresh India's policy and to advise the people in regard to the action to be undertaken in the emergencies that may arise in the immediate future.

The proposals of the British Government and their subsequent elucidation by Sir Stafford Cripps have led to greater bitterness and distrust of that Government and the spirit of non-cooperation with Britain has grown. They have demonstrated that even in this hour of danger, not only to India but to the cause of the United Nations, the British Government functions as an imperialist government and refuses to recognise the independence of India or to part with any real power.

India's participation in the war was a purely British act imposed upon the Indian people without the consent of their representatives. While India has no quarrel with the people of any country, she has repeatedly declared her antipathy to Nazism and Fascism as to Imperialism. If India were free she would have determined her own policy and might have kept out of the war, though her sympathies would, in any event, have been with the victims of aggression. If, however, circumstances had led her to join the war, she would have done so as a free country fighting for freedom, and her defence would have been organised on a popular basis with a national army under national control and leadership and with intimate contacts with the people. A free India would know how to defend herself in the event of any aggressor attacking her. The present Indian army is in fact an offshoot of the British army and has been maintained till now mainly to hold India in subjection. It has been completely segregated from the general population, who can in no sense regard it as their own.

The essential differences between the imperialist and the popular conceptions of defence is demonstrated by the fact that while foreign armies are invited to India for that defence, the vast manpower of India herself is not utilised for the purpose. India's past experience teaches her that it is harmful to her interests and dangerous to the cause of her freedom to introduce foreign armies in India. It is significant and extraordinary that India's inexhaustible manpower should remain untapped, while India develops into a battle-ground between foreign armies fighting on her soil or on her frontiers, and her defence is not supposed to be a subject fit for popular control. India resents this treatment of her people as chattels to be disposed of by foreign authority.

The A.I.C.C. is convinced that India will attain her freedom through her own strength and will retain it likewise. The present crisis, as well as the experience of negotiations with Sir Stafford Cripps, make it impossible for the Congress to consider any schemes or proposals which retain, even in a partial measure, British control and authority in India. Not only the interests of India but also Britain's safety, and world peace and freedom demand that Britain must abandon her hold on India. It is on the basis of independence alone that India can deal with Britain or other nations.

The Committee repudiates the idea that freedom can come to India through interference or invasion by any foreign nation, whatever the professions of that nation may be. In case an invasion takes place, it must be resisted. Such resistance can only take the form of non-violent non-cooperation as the British Government has prevented the organisation of national defence by the people in any other way. The Committee would therefore expect the people of India to offer complete non-violent non-cooperation to the invading forces and not to render any assistance to them. We may not bend the knee to the aggressor nor obey any of his orders. We may not look to him for favours nor fall to his bribes. If he wishes to take possession of our homes and our fields we will refuse to give them up even if we have to die in the effort to resist them. In places where the British and the invading forces are fighting our non-cooperation will be fruitless

and unnecessary. Not to put any obstacle in the way of British forces will often be the only way of demonstrating our non-cooperation with the invader. Judging from their attitude, the British Government do not need any help from us beyond our non-interference. They desire our help only as slaves—a position we can never accept.

The success of such a policy of non-cooperation and non-violent resistance to the invader will largely depend on the intensive working out of the Congress constructive programme, and more especially the programme of self-sufficiency and self-protection in all parts of the country.

43. *Copy of a telegram dated 31 May 1942 from Winston Churchill to Lord Linlithgow (via India Office)*

PERSONAL AND SECRET

31 May 1942

YOUR 26-U OF MAY 27 DURING HIS LAST VISIT HERE MR HOPKINS EXPRESSED HIMSELF IN SCATHING TERMS ABOUT JOHNSON WHO CARRIES NO SPECIAL WEIGHT WITH PRESIDENT I HAVE ALREADY TELEGRAPHED ONCE TO HOPKINS WARNING HIM ABOUT JOHNSON AND I AM SENDING ANOTHER TELEGRAM TODAY ASKING DEFINITELY HE SHOULD NOT RETURN TO INDIA GOOD WISHES

44. *Copy of a telegram dated 31 May 1942 from Winston Churchill to Hopkins*

PERSONAL AND SECRET

31 May 1942

THERE ARE RUMOURS THAT THE PRESIDENT WILL INVITE PANDIT NEHRU TO THE UNITED STATES I HOPE THERE IS NO TRUTH IN THIS AND THAT ANYWAY THE PRESIDENT WILL CONSULT ME BEFOREHAND WE DO NOT AT ALL RELISH THE PROSPECT OF JOHNSON'S RETURN TO INDIA THE VICEROY IS ALSO MUCH PERTURBED AT THE PROSPECT WE ARE FIGHTING TO DEFEND THIS VAST MASS OF HELPLESS INDIANS FROM IMMINENT INVASION I KNOW YOU WILL REMEMBER MY MANY DIFFICULTIES

45. *Copy of a telegram dated 1 June 1942 from Hopkins to Winston Churchill*

SECRET

1 June 1942

RUMOURS RELATIVE TO INVITATION TO NEHRU ENTIRELY UNFOUNDED
JOHNSON ILL AND HAS NO PLANS TO RETURN TO INDIA¹

¹Mr Hopkins' message was transmitted by L S Amery to Lord Linlithgow in a telegram dated
2 June

46. *Copy of a telegram dated 11 July 1942 from Government of India, Home Department, to the Secretary of State*

IMPORTANT

New Delhi
11 July 1942

FINAL FORM OF RESOLUTION OF CONGRESS WORKING COMMITTEE IS LIKELY TO BE RELEASED SHORTLY INDICATIONS DERIVED MAINLY FROM INTELLIGENT ANTICIPATIONS IN MESSAGES OF PRESS CORRESPONDENTS SEEN IN CENSORSHIP ARE THAT IT WILL ATTRIBUTE REGRETTABLE SPIRIT OF DEFEATISM IN THIS COUNTRY TO BRITISH POLITICAL TREATMENT OF INDIA AND WILL APPEAL TO THE ALLIED POWERS TO BRING PRESSURE ON HIS MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT TO GRANT INDIA FREEDOM FOR OSTENSIBLE PURPOSE OF GALVANIZING WAR EFFORT WITH THREAT THAT IF THIS APPEAL IS REJECTED OR PROVES UNSUCCESSFUL CONGRESS WILL LAUNCH WHIRLWIND MASS CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT ON THE LINES OF EARLIER MOVEMENTS IT WILL BE UNDER GANDHI'S SUPREME DIRECTION AND CONTROL AND WILL DISCARD ANY ATTEMPT AT NON-EMBARRASSMENT

RESOLUTION IN THESE TERMS APART FROM DISINGENUOUSNESS ON ITS [PREMISES] WHICH ARE NO DOUBT DESIGNED TO SECURE AMERICAN AND CHINESE SYMPATHY WOULD BE SHEER BLACKMAIL AND COULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO PASS UNCHALLENGED WE PROPOSE TO AWAIT FINAL [TEXT] AND THEN CONSIDER WHETHER TO BAN PUBLICATION EITHER IN INDIA OR OUTSIDE OR BOTH BUT WE BELIEVE THAT SUCH A COURSE WOULD BE NEITHER EFFECTIVE NOR DESIRABLE FROM OUR OWN POINT OF VIEW IN ANY CASE ACTION AGAINST CONGRESS ORGANISATION WILL HAVE TO FOLLOW IF THE THREAT IS IMPLEMENTED AND NEED FOR EFFECTIVE PROPAGANDA ON THE LINES OF MY TELEGRAM DATED JUNE [7TH] BECOMES OF IMMEDIATE AND VITAL IMPORTANCE BOTH IN ENGLAND AMERICA AND OTHER ALLIED COUNTRIES

UNTIL FINAL TEXT IS RELEASED WE ARE HOLDING UP ALL OUTGOING PRESS MESSAGES REFERRED TO IN PARAGRAPH 1 SINCE WE SEE NO REASON WHY ADVANCE CONGRESS PROPAGANDA SHOULD BE PERMITTED AND BEFORE PUBLICATION OF RESOLUTION WE PROPOSE TO HOLD PRESS CONFERENCE HERE

AT WHICH OUR CASE WOULD BE EXPLAINED WE ARE ALSO WARNING PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS TO OVERHAUL PLANS FOR DEALING WITH MASS CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT ON THE LINES EXPLAINED IN MY LETTER OF AUGUST 2ND 1940¹ WHICH WAS COMMUNICATED TO YOU WITH HOME DEPARTMENT LETTER 3/13/(40)² DATED AUGUST 12TH 1940 WE SHALL OF COURSE ADDRESS YOU AGAIN IF WE CONSIDER IT NECESSARY TO PROMULGATE EMERGENCY POWERS ORDINANCE³ MUCH WILL DEPEND ON THE CHARACTER OF THE MOVEMENT THREATENED IN ANY CASE WE ASSUME CONSIDERABLE INTERVAL WILL ELAPSE BEFORE MOVEMENT ITSELF IS LAUNCHED AND GANDHI WILL GIVE US FULL NOTICE OF HIS INTENTIONS

¹Home Department letter 3/13/40 Political (1) of 2 August 1940 to Chief Secretaries of all Provincial Governments infers that during an emergency the Government of India's major responsibility would be to ensure that nothing impeded the war effort. It outlined the policy to deal with revolutionary movements. (Lord Linlithgow in his letter of 8 August 1940 to all Provincial Governments explained that a Civil Disobedience Movement directed by Congress was the situation primarily envisaged.) During the preparatory stage of such a movement the ordinary law or the Defence of India Rules were to be enforced against its supporters, including prominent persons. Even where breaches of law were not involved, it might be necessary to employ the power of preventive detention under the Defence of India Rules. Once the preparatory stage was passed and a definite and recognisable movement had been initiated, the Government of India felt it essential to crush it at the outset and prevent it obtaining any momentum. All necessary powers would be taken in a single comprehensive Ordinance.

The letter outlined forms of action on the occurrence of a revolutionary movement, requiring preliminary preparation in the Provinces, namely, immediate action against any organisation launching or supporting the movement, the preventive arrest and detention of leaders; the seizure of buildings and funds; and the provision of adequate jail accommodation. Separate memoranda were attached, or to follow, on the Control of the Press; Postal and Telegraphic Censorship; Government Publicity and Intelligence; policy to deal with a no-tax campaign; policy to deal with meetings, processions and arrests concerned therewith, and the scale of punishments, and policy for 'Economic Warfare'.

²Home Department letter 3/13/40 Political (1) of 12 August 1940 forwarded to the India Office the letter summarised in note 1.

³The draft of an 'Emergency Powers Ordinance' (previously named 'Revolutionary Movement Ordinance') had been prepared should the circumstances arise for which it would be required.

47. *Copy of a telegram dated 13 July 1942 from L. S. Amery to Lord Linlithgow*

MOST IMMEDIATE
PRIVATE AND PERSONAL

India Office
13th July 1942

MY PRIVATE AND PERSONAL TELEGRAM OF 13TH JULY RE CONGRESS RESOLUTION OF 10TH JULY CABINET DID NOT COME TO ANY CONCLUSION ON ACTION TO BE

TAKEN PENDING RECEIPT OF YOUR RECOMMENDATIONS BUT THEY AUTHORISED ME TO GIVE YOU IMMEDIATELY AN ASSURANCE THAT IF IN THE OPINION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA THE SITUATION SHOULD MAKE IT NECESSARY TO TAKE STRONG MEASURES IN ORDER TO ENSURE THE SAME COOPERATION FOR THE DEFENCE OF INDIA AS WE HAVE IN THIS COUNTRY YOU WOULD HAVE THE FULLEST SUPPORT OF H M G

IN MY OWN VIEW RESOLUTION OF JULY 10TH IS SUFFICIENT TO JUSTIFY TAKING ACTION BUT YOU MAY PREFER TO AWAIT MAIN CONGRESS RESOLUTION CABINET WOULD WISH TO CONSIDER ANY ACTION YOU PROPOSE IF TIME PERMITS BUT I THINK THAT IF YOU FEEL IMMEDIATE ACTION TO BE VITAL YOU CAN RELY ON THE ABOVE ASSURANCE

48. *Copy of a letter dated 13 July 1942 from L.S. Amery to Lord Linlithgow*

PRIVATE

India Office
13th July 1942

I have just seen your telegram giving *The Hindustan Times* summary of the preliminary resolution of the Congress Working Committee and am sending you an immediate telegram pending any decision the Cabinet may take on the matter when I bring it up before them this evening. As the fast mail goes tomorrow morning, I shall not, in this letter at any rate, be able to give you the result of the Cabinet meeting.

2. What I feel is that Congress has definitely shown its hand as claiming to be an authority parallel to the Government of India and entitled to tell the public to defy the authority of the latter. That is [a] quite impossible position and one that we ought not to trifle with on the grounds that actual action has not been taken by any particular individual. What they have done would certainly lead to their immediate arrest and prosecution here and no doubt to very drastic punishment. The object of it all seems to me very obvious: namely, to create a general atmosphere of defiance of Government and of ill-feeling, in the course of which the Government will be driven to a series of actions which will be increasingly misrepresented in order to fan the flame of resistance and to create the kind of situation in which the Americans and some of our people will begin to say that there is already a civil war in India and that things cannot be worse if we give Congress what they demand. Alternatively, that when we do find ourselves forced to deal drastically with the Congress leaders, the volume of outcry will be tremendous and the reaction really dangerous to the defence of India. This they don't care about, being, as Rajagopalachari has pointed out, mainly defeatists anyhow.

3. The only answer to my mind in such a situation is to act at once, take up the challenge to our authority and arrest the Working Committee, and as many more

as you think necessary, to show India that we mean business. Whether you should then prosecute them or not, or whether you should take further steps in dealing with Congress generally, must depend on a great many local factors which I cannot pretend to estimate at this end. Naturally, too, you will have to take prompt measures with the Press to prevent the circulation of resolutions or of information about Congress generally. This may necessitate putting an end to the gentleman's agreement,¹ but that can't be helped.

O.K !—L.

4. In any case, it seems to me clearly that the point has been reached where we should not hesitate to act fast and act vigorously so as to leave no doubt in the minds of both friends and enemies in India where we stand. I believe myself that the effect of action now will be to confound Congress, who are already sufficiently disunited over the country as a whole, and to strengthen all our supporters. I don't know how far in this matter you feel you have got to carry the whole of your Executive with you, but I should have thought you could make it clear to them that prompt action now, and the consequent burning of our boats as regards appeasing Congress, will not only strengthen their hands, but effectively put out of the picture any question of their being replaced by Congress nominees in the near future.

They are doing well, so far. I don't want to give them a chance of running out on what must be a nasty and most unpopular job which they would be tempted to do if I "high-hatted" them.—L.

5. I don't know, of course, what elements of weakness and hesitation there may be in the Cabinet here, but I have no doubt that they will not be able to stand up to the two of us together if we decide on a clear course of action or even take it ahead of Cabinet sanction. This is a time when a fire brigade cannot wait to ring up headquarters, but must turn the hose on the flames at once. I have no fear of being able to hold the position in the House of Commons.

Good for you!—L.

¹Resulting from conversations held in Delhi in November 1940 between the Government of India and representatives of the Press. In return for an assurance that the Press would not impede the war effort, the Government of India rescinded an order under Defence of India Rule 41(1)(b) prohibiting publication of any matter calculated to foment opposition to the successful prosecution of the war.

49. *Copy of a telegram dated 20 July 1942 from Lord Linlithgow to L.S. Amery*

IMMEDIATE
PERSONAL

New Delhi
20th July 1942

MY PERSONAL TELEGRAM OF 17TH JULY AND PARAGRAPHS 1 AND 3 OF YOUR PERSONAL TELEGRAM OF 16TH JULY.

2 I HAVE DISCUSSED WITH MY ADVISERS. WE AGREE THAT YOUR PARAGRAPHS 1 AND 3 REFER TO TWO POINTS WHICH MUST BE TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION IN LAYING DOWN OUR GENERAL POLICY AND PLAN OF ACTION IN THE FACE OF CONGRESS THREAT AND THE COMPREHENSIVE ARRANGEMENTS WHICH WE ARE WORKING OUT HERE WILL COVER THESE POINTS AS WELL AS OTHERS

3. FOR THE MOMENT I WOULD ONLY SAY, AS REGARDS PARAGRAPH 1, THAT THE VIEW OF MY ADVISERS IS THAT THE RESOLUTION OF JULY 10TH COULD BE REGARDED AS A PREJUDICIAL REPORT,¹ AND THEREFORE OPEN TO ACTION UNDER THE DEFENCE OF INDIA RULES. IT MIGHT ALSO AFFORD SUFFICIENT LEGAL GROUND FOR DECLARING CONGRESS AN UNLAWFUL ASSOCIATION.² BUT MY ADVISERS, WITH WHOM I AGREE, ARE OF OPINION THAT IT WOULD BE INEXPEDIENT TO TAKE ACTION AS SUCH, EITHER ON THE BASIS OF THAT RESOLUTION ALONE OR ON THE BASIS OF THE MAIN RESOLUTION OF 14TH JULY, UNTIL AFTER THE MEETING OF THE A.I.C.C. IN BOMBAY. WHEN IT EVENTUALLY COMES TO THE POINT OF TAKING ACTION, I AGREE THAT WE SHOULD MAKE USE OF BOTH RESOLUTIONS. IT IS INCIDENTALLY TRUE THAT GANDHI IS NOT A MEMBER OF THE WORKING COMMITTEE NOR EVEN A FOUR-ANNA MEMBER OF CONGRESS. THE LEGAL DIFFICULTY MAY BE OVERCOME IF, AS WE EXPECT, THE A.I.C.C. MEETING PUTS HIM IN CHARGE OF CONGRESS POLICY AND, IF EVEN THEN HE WERE STILL TO REMAIN A NON-MEMBER IN THE EYES OF THE LAW, HE COULD CERTAINLY BE PROCEEDED AGAINST FOR ASSISTING THE OPERATIONS OF CONGRESS ONCE IT HAS BEEN DECLARED AN UNLAWFUL ASSOCIATION BUT, WHILE I THINK IT WELL TO MAKE OUR VIEW ON THESE POINTS CLEAR, THE ARGUMENT IS SOMEWHAT ACADEMIC SINCE, IF ACTION IS TO BE TAKEN AGAINST GANDHI, IT IS MOST LIKELY THAT IT WILL TAKE THE FORM OF ARREST UNDER THE STATE PRISONERS' REGULATIONS.³

4. PARAGRAPH 3 OF YOUR NO. 12635. IT MIGHT BE LEGAL TO PROMULGATE THE EMERGENCY POWERS ORDINANCE NOW. BUT I AM QUITE CERTAIN THAT IT WOULD BE UNWISE TO DO SO. IT WOULD HAVE NO DIFFERENT EFFECT BUT RATHER THE OPPOSITE, AND WOULD ONLY GIVE CONGRESS ADVANCE WARNING OF OUR PLANS

¹ Rule 38(1)(c) stated that "No person shall, without lawful authority or excuse, make, print, publish or distribute any document containing, or spread by any other means whatsoever, any prejudicial report." Rule 34(7) defined a 'prejudicial report' as "any report, statement or visible representation, whether true or false, which, or the publishing of which, is, or is an incitement to the commission of, a prejudicial act as defined in this rule".

² Under the Indian Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1908, Sec. 16.

³ These included Bengal Regulation III of 1818, see No. 321, note 3.

50. *Copy of a telegram dated 24 July 1942 from Lord Linlithgow to L. S. Amery*

IMMEDIATE

New Delhi
24 July 1942

QUESTION WHAT ARE THE PRESENT INTENTIONS OF HIS MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT AS REGARDS CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA?

ANSWER: THE INTENTIONS OF HIS MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT WERE DEFINED IN THE DECLARATION CARRIED TO INDIA BY SIR STAFFORD CRIPPS IN THE SPRING OF THIS YEAR. FOR REASONS IN SOME CASES MUTUALLY DESTRUCTIVE, IT PROVED IMPOSSIBLE TO SECURE THE SUPPORT OF THE PRINCIPAL ELEMENTS IN INDIA'S NATIONAL LIFE FOR THE PROPOSALS IN THAT DECLARATION, AND THEY WERE ACCORDINGLY WITHDRAWN. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PROCEED FURTHER WITH THIS MATTER IN THE MIDDLE OF THE WAR, AND IN CIRCUMSTANCES SO GRAVE AS THOSE WHICH CONFRONT US. AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE WAR MY HON'BLE FRIEND MAY REST ASSURED THAT HIS MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT WILL BE AS CONCERNED AS THEY HAVE BEEN IN THE PAST TO SEE A SOLUTION OF THE INDIAN PROBLEM ON THE SAME LIBERAL BASIS AS CHARACTERISED THE DECLARATION CARRIED TO INDIA BY SIR STAFFORD CRIPPS, AND WITH FULL REGARD FOR THE LEGITIMATE CLAIMS OF ALL ELEMENTS IN INDIA'S NATIONAL LIFE.

51. *Text of the "Quit India" Resolution adopted by the All-India Congress Committee on 8 August 1942*

The All India Congress Committee has given the most careful consideration to the reference made to it by the Working Committee in their resolution dated July 14, 1942, and to subsequent events, including the development of the war situation, the utterances of responsible spokesmen of the British Government, and the comments and criticisms made in India and abroad. The Committee approves of and endorses that resolution, and is of opinion that events subsequent to it have given it further justification, and have made it clear that the immediate ending of British rule in India is an urgent necessity, both for the sake of India and for the success of the cause of the United Nations. The continuation of that rule is degrading and enfeebling India and making her progressively less capable of defending herself and of contributing to the cause of world freedom.

The Committee has viewed with dismay the deterioration of the situation on the Russian and Chinese [fronts and conveys to the Russian and Chinese]¹ peoples its high appreciation of their heroism in defence of their freedom. This increasing peril makes it incumbent on all those who strive for freedom and who sympathise with the victims of aggression, to examine the foundations of the policy so far pursued by the Allied Nations, which have led to repeated and disastrous failure. It is not by adhering to such aims and policies and methods

that failure can be converted into success, for past experience has shown that failure is inherent in them. These policies have been based not on freedom so much as on the domination of subject and Colonial countries, and the continuation of the Imperialist tradition and method. The possession of Empire, instead of adding to the strength of the ruling power, has become a burden and a curse. India, the classic land of modern Imperialism, has become the crux of the question, for by the freedom of India will Britain and the United Nations be judged, and the peoples of Asia and Africa be filled with hope and enthusiasm.

The ending of British rule in this country is thus a vital immediate issue on which depend the future of the war and the success of freedom and democracy. A free India will assure this success by throwing all her great resources in the struggle for freedom and against the aggression of Nazism, Fascism and Imperialism. This will not only affect materially the fortunes of the war, but will bring all subject and oppressed humanity on the side of the United Nations, and give these nations, whose ally India would be, the moral and spiritual leadership of the world. India in bondage will continue to be the symbol of British Imperialism and the taint of that imperialism will affect the fortunes of all the United Nations.

The peril of today, therefore, necessitates the independence of India and the ending of British domination. No future promises or guarantees can affect the present situation or meet that peril. They cannot produce the needed psychological effect on the mind of the masses. Only the glow of freedom now can release that energy and enthusiasm of millions of people which will immediately transform the nature of the war.

The A.I.C.C., therefore, repeats with all emphasis the demand for the withdrawal of the British power from India. On the declaration of India's independence, a provisional Government will be formed and free India will become an ally of the United Nations, sharing with them in the trials and tribulations of the joint enterprise of the struggle for freedom. The provisional Government can only be formed by the cooperation of the principal parties and groups in the country. It will thus be a composite Government, representative of all important sections of the people of India. Its primary functions must be to defend India and resist aggression with all the armed as well as the non-violent forces at its command, together with its Allied Powers, and to promote the well-being and progress of the workers in the fields and factories and elsewhere to whom essentially all power and authority must belong. The provisional Government will evolve a scheme for a Constituent Assembly which will prepare a Constitution for the Government of India acceptable to all sections of the people. This Constitution, according to the Congress view, should be a federal one, with the largest measure of autonomy for the federating units, and with the residuary powers vesting in these units. The future relations between India and the Allied Nations will be adjusted by representatives of all these free countries conferring together for their mutual advantage and for their cooperation in the common task of resisting aggression. Freedom will enable India to resist aggression

effectively with the people's united will and strength behind it.

The freedom of India must be the symbol of and prelude to this freedom of all other Asiatic nations under foreign domination. Burma, Malaya, Indo-China, the Dutch Indies, Iran and Iraq must also attain their complete freedom. It must be clearly understood that such of these countries as are under Japanese control now must not subsequently be placed under the rule or control of any other Colonial Power.

While the A.I.C.C. must primarily be concerned with the independence and defence of India in this hour of danger, the Committee is of opinion that the future peace, security and ordered progress of the world demand a world federation of free nations, and on no other basis can the problems of the modern world be solved. Such a world federation would ensure the freedom of its constituent nations, the prevention of aggression and exploitation by one nation over another, the protection of national minorities, the advancement of all backward areas and peoples, and the pooling of the world's resources for the common good of all. On the establishment of such a world federation, disarmament would be practicable in all countries, national armies, navies and air forces would no longer be necessary, and a world federal defence force would keep the world peace and prevent aggression.

An independent India would gladly join such world federation and cooperate on an equal basis with other countries in the solution of international problems.

Such a federation should be open to all nations who agree with its fundamental principles. In view of the war, however, the federation must inevitably, to begin with, be confined to the United Nations; such a step taken now will have a most powerful effect on the war, on the peoples of the Axis countries, and on the peace to come.

The Committee regretfully realizes, however, that despite the tragic and overwhelming lessons of the war and the perils that overhang the world, the Governments of few countries are yet prepared to take this inevitable step towards world federation. The reactions of the British Government and the misguided criticism of the foreign Press also make it clear that even the obvious demand for India's independence is resisted, though this has been made essentially to meet the present peril and to enable India to defend herself and help China and Russia in their hour of need. The Committee is anxious not to embarrass in any way the defence of China or Russia, whose freedom is precious and must be preserved, or to jeopardise the defensive capacity of the United Nations. But the peril grows both to India and these nations, and inaction and submission to a foreign administration at this stage is not only degrading India and reducing her capacity to defend herself and resist aggression but is no answer to that growing peril and is no service to the peoples of the United Nations. The earnest appeal of the Working Committee to Great Britain and the United Nations has so far met with no response and the criticisms made in many foreign quarters have shown an ignorance of India's and the world's need, and sometimes even hostility to India's freedom, which is significant of a mentality of domination and racial

superiority which cannot be tolerated by a proud people conscious of their strength and of the justice of their cause.

The A.I.C.C. would yet again, at this moment, in the interest of world freedom, renew this appeal to Britain and the United Nations. But the Committee feels that it is no longer justified in holding the nation back from endeavouring to assert its will against an imperialist and authoritarian Government which dominates over it and prevents it from functioning in its own interest and in the interest of humanity. The Committee resolves, therefore, to sanction, for the vindication of India's inalienable right to freedom and independence, the starting of a mass struggle on non-violent lines on the widest possible scale, so that the country might utilize all the non-violent strength it has gathered during the last 22 years of peaceful struggle. Such a struggle must inevitably be under the leadership of Gandhiji and the Committee requests him to take the lead and guide the nation in the steps to be taken.

The Committee appeals to the people of India to face the dangers and hardships that will fall to their lot with courage and endurance, and to hold together under the leadership of Gandhiji and carry out his instructions as disciplined soldiers of Indian freedom. They must remember that non-violence is the basis of this movement. A time may come when it may not be possible to issue instructions or for instructions to reach our people, and when no Congress Committee can function. When this happens every man and woman who is participating in this movement must function for himself or herself within the four corners of the general instructions issued. Every Indian who desires freedom and strives for it must be his own guide urging him on along the hard road where there is no resting place and which leads ultimately to the independence of India.

Lastly, whilst the A.I.C.C. has stated its own view of the future governance under free India, the A.I.C.C. wishes to make it quite clear to all concerned that by embarking on a mass struggle, it has no intention of gaining power for the Congress. The power, when it comes, will belong to the whole people of India.

¹The words in square brackets are from the text in the Government of India's secret print: *Quarterly Survey of the Political and Constitutional Position in British India*.

52. *The Congress Working Committee resolution on War—A note of dissent**

I seek your permission to make my own position and that of some other members of the Working Committee clear regarding the resolution. This resolution opens the door, however small the opening may be, for armed help in this war, particularly for the defence of the country and for the larger causes which are emerging out of it, provided that British Government accepts India's demands. Our belief is that arms have not settled any dispute in the world nor are

they ever likely to do so in future. It is the universal experience of all countries that dependence on arms leads from one war to another. The defeated party starts preparing for another war so that it may defeat the victor and in this way one war lays the foundation of another war and nothing gets settled. We therefore believe that war has not solved any problem and nothing can be finally settled so long as dependence on arms continues. What I am stating here is not a mere theoretical proposition. We are convinced that it is also politically necessary. The happenings in the world even in the course of the present war have shown the futility of armed resistance in the case of many countries which have had warlike traditions and had made tremendous preparations for war. It is politically wrong in our opinion to involve the country in war at this time. Having accepted the path of non-violence the country has made tremendous progress during the last twenty or twenty-two years. The benefit which the country had derived from it is obvious. We do not like to give up this tried principle at this critical time even to a limited extent. We therefore consider that the opening that this resolution provides for armed assistance in this war is not in the best interests of the country and we wish that India should not in this war and on the present occasion also in the least relax its hold of the principle of Ahimsa. We realise at the same time that by merely passing the resolution we are not called upon to take up arms today. That can happen only if the British Government makes a declaration in favour of Independence of India and transfers the responsibility of administration to our people. There appears to be no chance of that happening today. We have not accordingly thought it necessary to resign from the Working Committee. When the British Government opens the way for armed assistance by the Congress, then will be the time for us to make our choice.

*The name of the dissenter and the date on which this was written are not known

53. *Instructions issued by the Congress Working Committee in response to complaints received in the office of the A.I.C.C. regarding various military orders such as evacuation of villages, destruction of country boats, requisition without compensation of vehicles and private and public buildings etc.*

Whereas numerous complaints have been received in the office of the A.I.C.C. regarding various military orders, such as evacuation of villages and lands without due notice and proper compensation, seizure and destruction of country boats even where life is impossible without them, requisition of cycles, motor vehicles and carts without proper compensation and thought for the needs of the public, requisition of private and public buildings without due notice and compensation;

Whereas the facts, such as, no step having been taken to ward off salt famine by

putting the most liberal interpretation on the Gandhi-Irwin agreement and making salt free, discrimination between the Europeans, Anglo-Indians and Anglo-Burmans on the one side and Indians on the other, misbehaviour of troops, restriction on organisation of self-protection in some Provinces, creation of serious problems by the control of prices and distribution of foodgrains etc. make it abundantly clear that the interests of the civil population are not properly safeguarded;

The Working Committee deems it necessary to issue the following instructions for the guidance of the people concerned and hopes that they will be carried out according as circumstances demand, provided that in all cases before the final decision to disobey any order or resist any measure is taken up, all possible avenues of negotiation and relief through negotiations shall be thoroughly explored.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. (a) With regard to evacuation and other military orders involving loss, either temporary or permanent, of property of any kind, full compensation should be demanded and unless and until the question of compensation is settled the property should not be parted with whatever may be the consequences.

In the case of evacuation, full compensation means equivalent land and buildings, and transport of the people and their belongings to the places prepared for them and paying them a living wage till they find suitable occupations.

(b) In the case of seizure of boats, full compensation should be demanded and boats should not be surrendered till the question of compensation is settled. In those areas where life is impossible without boats, the order has simply to be disobeyed.

(c) In the case of requisition of cycles, motor vehicles, houses, etc., full compensation should be demanded and unless and until this question is settled, the owners should not part with their possessions even at the risk of inviting all consequences upon themselves.

2. (a) With regard to the misbehaviour of troops, the public should organise and protect themselves against the misconduct of troops, as far as possible by non-violent means.

(b) In order to prevent salt famine, people should manufacture salt for their own consumption and for that of their cattle, wherever they can, at the risk of prosecution.

(c) With regard to foodgrains, each area should be self-supporting and if fluctuations of prices or any order of authorities tend to deplete any area of its required food-stuffs, then this should be resisted, first, by approaching the stock-holders and persuading them not to sell their stocks, or by picketing the sale-depots, if the first method proves conclusively to be of no avail.

(d) With regard to restriction on organisation of self-protection, all orders to that effect should be disobeyed inasmuch as it is the inherent right of every

human being to protect the life and property of his or her own and also those of neighbours

(e) With regard to discrimination between Indians and others, the Committee expects all Indians, in whatever sphere of life they may be, to resist such humiliation and take upon themselves all consequences, including loss of service and prosecution.

54. *Decision by A.I.C.C. on the competence of the Tamil Nadu Provincial Congress Committee to take disciplinary action against C Rajagopalachariar and on the resolution passed by the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee asking Shri Sambamurti, Speaker of the Madras Legislative Assembly, to show cause why disciplinary action should not be taken against him*

Representations from Tamil Nadu, Andhra, Karnataka to take disciplinary action against Shri Rajagopalachariar for carrying on propaganda contrary to the policy of the Congress were considered. The Committee decided that the Tamil Nadu P.C.C. was competent to take disciplinary action against Shri Rajagopalachariar if his activities constituted a breach of Congress discipline.

The letter from Shri Sambamurti, Speaker of the Madras Legislative Assembly, in connection with the resolution of the Andhra P.C.C. which asked him to show cause why disciplinary action should not be taken against him for carrying on propaganda contrary to the established policy of the Congress was considered. The Committee decided that the Andhra P.C.C. was within its rights in passing the resolution it did about Shri Sambamurti. Shri Sambamurti is bound by the pledge he took when he stood for election to the Assembly on the Congress ticket. The fact that Shri Sambamurti was a Speaker did not absolve him from allegiance to the pledge. It was strange that while Shri Sambamurti on the one hand claimed as a Speaker the privilege of being above parties he should on the other engage himself in actively controversial politics and carry on propaganda prejudicial to the Congress policy and programme.

55. *Peace Appeal* by Mohammad Yunus*

AN APPEAL TO ALL MY COUNTRYMEN- MUSLIM AND NON-MUSLIM
BRETHREN ALIKE

After deep cogitation I feel the time has come when every well-wisher of every community and of his motherland ought no longer to remain silent spectator while controversies that are fanning bitter feelings between different

communities which are bound to lead them to self-destruction are fast assuming a serious situation, I am issuing this appeal in all humility and in all sincerity with the hope that my Muslim as well as non-Muslim brethren will give due consideration to this humble appeal for restoration of good feelings between different communities, castes and creeds that inhabit our unhappy land. I think I am justified in saying without fear of any contradiction that every leader of every community admits that it is essential that the present tension between Hindus and Muslims must cease, and good feelings restored between them. The difficulty is as to the procedure which may be followed to bring about the happy and desired result.

My main object in issuing this appeal is to give food for serious thought on the present tension between the Hindus and the Muslims so that the great thinkers of both communities may devise means for the solution of this most serious problem that is confronting the two communities and which has so far baffled a solution. In all such conflicts the minor community naturally suffers more than the different communities. For that will serve no useful purpose nor the raking up of old complaints will bring about a better feeling. I would most earnestly appeal to members of all communities that whatever wrong members of any community may have done that community ought to repent and try to mend its ways and should not make any attempt to defend the wrongs perpetrated, nor should the members of the community wronged, if they desire to bring about good feelings, need repeatedly agitate over it.

It is necessary for us to consider that after all, apart from political rights, what are the main causes of friction between the two communities; and I appeal to members of both the communities to formulate their grievances and each community should make demand from the other for settlement of the same. Such a demand should be settled in a joint conference of the two communities representing all shades of opinion of each community. If there be a serious desire to settle them and bring about harmonious relations between the two communities, there will not be much difficulty in achieving the desired result. As I have decided to do what little I can in this respect, I will welcome suggestions from all interested in the solution of the difficulties that confront the two communities. As a solution of all-India problem may be difficult I will confine my efforts chiefly to the solution of this problem in Bihar and, if God helps, with success in Bihar, other Provinces may follow our lead.

Mohammad Yunus, M.L.A.
Barrister-at-Law
Ex-Premier of Bihar
Patna

56. *Copy of a letter* from J.B. Kripalani to Dr. Rajendra Prasad*

ALL INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE

Sevagram
Wardha

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I am sending you herewith a telegram received from Bihar. You will please deal with it.

Things here are going on as usual. I hope the riot situation is under control. The reports in the Press are favourable. When should we expect you here?

J.B. Kripalani

Enclosure:

J.B. KRIPALANI
GENERAL SECRETARY
A.I.C.C.

SHAHABAD DISTRICT BOARD CHAIRMAN ELECTION 14TH MAY
26 CONGRESS 10 NON-CONGRESS MEMBERS REVOLTING SETTING
UP A NON-CONGRESS AS COMMITTEE MEMBER URGENTLY DIRECT
RAJENDRA BABU TO TAKE ACTION

RAGHUBANS

*The letter bears no date

57. *Statement* issued by Shah Mohamad Umair on the need for the formation of a Progressive Muslim Front*

I am firmly convinced that almost all the methods having proved ineffective we have to find out a fresh and new method of approach to work successfully and peacefully among the Muslim masses and intelligentsia. The way in which the present political life of the Congressite and Progressive Muslims is hampered due to absence of any front of their own and also the way in which its effects and reactions have made their life so much disorganised inside and outside the Congress certainly demands our greatest attention from various points of view.

No responsibility, no organisation and consequently no attraction in their national life is what we are looking at. Our decentralisation in spite of being under one central organisation and our disunity in thoughts and voices in spite of being of one trend of mind is a misfortune indeed. When the circumstances are

like that, how can we overlook the suggestion of a front of Congressite and Progressive Muslims which in its way should mould their thoughts and opinions in an organised fashion, and which may at best help them to improve their own lot as well as to increase the Progressive Muslim elements within the Muslim masses.

Of course some shortsighted and surface-looking views may question the formation of such a front in face of the common and national organisation, "Congress". But going a little deeper the question will stand self-answered.

NATIONAL CONGRESS

On the face of it the Congress is such a vast national organisation consisting of so many different political, economic, and minority interests that the same (Congress) cannot satisfactorily function unless it gives strength to each of its constituent elements. Or the said constituents remain up and doing by themselves to strengthen the centre and to strengthen themselves individually. Such sub-organisations if not on sound footing may react adversely upon the entire central organisation just as an ordinary screw of a machine if weak or displaced is apt to affect adversely the working of the whole machine.

As a matter of fact the formation of the Progressive Muslim Front or the proposal to organise and strengthen the Muslim Congressite and other Progressive Muslim elements does not deserve to be discouraged from any point of view. The very existence of so many parties within and without the Congress like Kisan Sabha, Socialist group and various minority parties like Depressed Classes, Akalis, and Momins, etc., by their very nature of their being organised are supporting our suggested front. So if any element has completely forsaken itself and if there is any which is the life portrait of self-forgetfulness that is ourselves.

PROGRESSIVE FRONT

Under the circumstances if the undeniable necessity of a Progressive Front is not felt then there is no knowing when it will be. Perhaps it may be urged that the above-mentioned bodies are based on political principles, whereas this Front being out and out a concern of Muslims only. But this view is nothing more than an emotional sentiment. Evidently just as various other groups within and without the Congress have a separate name as well as programmes of their own the Progressive Muslim Front is meant for the Progressive and Congressite Muslims who at all events enjoy the position of a Muslim in or outside that body. In case they do not organise themselves within or without the great political body, their political standard can never be raised amidst so many organised parties, nor can they be able to add any progressive outlook to the Muslim masses. Much less any impression or attraction for the community and the organisation they belong to.

PLEA FOR FORMATION

For the avoidance of further discussion about the formation of this front let it be noted that the very existence of the Nationalist Muslim Conference and Azad Muslim Conference were laid down at the hands of the Congressites and nationalist Musalmans themselves and their programme acted upon within and without the Congress by them, yet no criticism against the formation of the said bodies were forthcoming from any of us. Apart from all such arguments, who can dispute the organisation of Khudai-Khidmatgars which in its individual capacity as yet is a permanent organised body of the Congressite Muslims of Frontier and whose incorporation at the Karachi Congress Session of 1933 is a factor working as the life-fountain for the Frontier Pathans as well as the Congress itself. It must be borne in mind that had there been no such individual organisation of their own side by side with that of the Congress the Frontier Muslim Congressites and the Congress Organisation would have been on no better level today. I am still hopeful that the Nationalist and Congress Muslim elements in this Province can still be raised to a more dignified political standard if they only approve of the necessity of the proposed Progressive Muslim Front amidst themselves.

In short, the following guiding principles are suggested here so that the solution of the establishment of the said Front may be made easier and the decisions may be made clearly in the light of the following lines without groping in the dark.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. The Progressive Muslim Front will consist of the Nationalist, Progressive and Congressite Muslims on the provincial basis for the time being.
2. The object of this Front will be the attainment of complete independence of the country through peaceful and non-violent ways and means.
3. The purport of this Front will be to organise and therefore to make of one voice the Nationalist and Congressite Muslim elements and thereby enable them to propagate the Progressive ideals effectively among the Musalmans.
4. This Front will cooperate with only such national bodies which will be based on lines of conciliation, peace, non-violence and independence of the country on condition that their programme should not be based on infidelity, irreligiousness, socialism and communism and which agrees to the principles of unity, harmony and good relations between the clans, sects and classes and favours the safeguarding of their religious, political, cultural and economic rights within the Government together with preservation of their language, script, system of electorate, education, etc.
5. Under the aims and objects of this Front business programme will be made from time to time with a view to organising and uniting all the Congressite, Progressive, and Nationalist Muslims.
6. If due to any adverse propaganda misunderstandings have been created in

the Musalmans against any national organisation on the basis of misrepresentations and any right or wrong grievances this Front will honestly endeavour in a cultured fashion to make an end of such misunderstandings through the national bodies concerned or otherwise. Also this Front will keep the Congress informed and fully alive to the Muslim sentiments, feelings and requirements from time to time and shall see that the rightful and just demands are duly satisfied and the sentiments respected.

7. The object of this Front will be to create proper atmosphere on solid grounds by maintaining best relations between different communities and political or non-political organisations. It will direct its chief attention and devote its best energies towards promoting permanently and solidly the sense of true and historical unity between the Hindus and Musalmans at the highest cost and sacrifice of the Front.

8. This will be duty of the Front to preach economy and thrift in the daily life of the Musalmans from financial point of view and also plain living, domestic science, handicrafts, physical culture and basic education.

9. There will also be a volunteer organisation of the Front.

10. Any adult Muslim (male or female), who approves of the aims and objects of the Front and signs its pledge can be its member.

11. There will be two classes amongst the members of this Front whose annual subscription will be -/ 5/6 and -/ 1/6 annually.

12. The central committee as well as the district and village committees will consist of a majority of its members of class I, i.e. who have paid five and half annas membership fee.

13. The Progressive Muslim Front under the above-mentioned points will keep its activities confined under the following three heads:

- (i) Approved Muslim members will carry on the extraordinary programme of the Front.
- (ii) Other members will devote to constructive programme.
- (iii) The remaining members will fulfil the need of encouraging materially and morally both the above-mentioned works.

Note: It is requested that after the perusal of the above proposals and the entire contents of this manifesto readers concerned will kindly oblige by sending in their valuable suggestions and opinions at an early date.

58. 'State Language of India—A Clarification', an article* by Dr. Rajendra Prasad

Shri K.G. Mashruwala has asked me to clarify two points arising out of my articles recently published in *Harijan*. He writes. "On the question of the language of High Courts and the medium of instruction in Universities, do I understand you correctly that you are of the opinion that it should be the common language of India in both the cases, and not the provincial language?"

Subject to change of opinion on further consideration, my present feeling is as follows.

The number of judgments to be appealed against before the Supreme Court, or deserving of being reported in Law Reports, is generally very small. In the first case it would not be very difficult to have the necessary records—including judgments of the High Court—translated into the common language. Even otherwise a good many original documents and records of proceedings of lower courts would have to be translated as at present. Translation into the common language is much easier than into English.

With regard to Law Reports, it could be arranged, I feel, to have report-worthy judgments authoritatively translated into the common language if they are not so already. They will be very few out of the several delivered from day to day. To avoid possible mistakes in translation, either the original judgments might also be reported, or there might be a double series, one in the provincial language and the other in the common language.

IN THE HIGH COURTS

But this does not mean that the provincial language alone should prevail in the High Courts. Both in the High Courts and Universities both the common and the provincial language should prevail equally. All students and professors in universities, and legal practitioners and judges in courts, who speak the provincial language, must be permitted to use that language. But with regard to those coming from other Provinces, while they should be expected to understand and follow the provincial language, they should be at liberty to express themselves in the common language.

As students and others belonging to the Province will be expected to have a good and sound knowledge of the common language (indeed, much superior to what they have of English today) they should not have any difficulty in following it. This would enable universities and the judiciary to draw upon the talents of other Provinces.

All-India academics, in whatever Province located, should, of course, use the common language. Time will decide whether the common and the provincial languages run a parallel course abreast or one gains precedence over the other in some parts, while the contrary is the case in others. In any case the common language will not be neglected.

THE LEGISLATIVE SOLUTION

This should solve the legislative problem also. Even if all legislation throughout the Union is originally passed in the common language, its translation into the local language will be necessary for the information of the public. While university students, lawyers and others might be expected to have a good command over the common language, the same cannot be said of all legislators. Their convenience demands that legislation should be originally in the provincial language in the provincial legislatures. But every Province should also publish its common language translation and in the case of multi-linguistic Provinces or for those legislators who prefer to speak in the common language there should be no obstacle to doing so.

In any case translations are unavoidable. Either you have to translate for the public, or for extra-provincial purposes. It would help the development of the provincial languages side by side with the common language if the original work is in the language of the Province.

I think I have sufficiently indicated in the first article that the study of the common language will have to be intensified. I envisage a time when every person in India claiming to be educated will know at least two languages, namely, the common language and the language of his own region. In a vast country like India this is the only possible solution if any kind of uniformity has to be maintained or rather if the country has not to be broken up into more or less independent units each having a language of its own which will be different from that of other regions.

INTENSIVE STUDY COURSES

It will, therefore, be necessary to intensify the study of the common language throughout the country. It may not be necessary for the universities all over the country to make the common language the medium of instruction but there is no doubt that a great many of their students will have to study the common language diligently if they hope to serve the country and keep themselves in touch with things of common interest all the country over. Lawyers, judicial officers, members of legislatures and teachers in superior grades must know the common language if they hope to be able to discharge their duties satisfactorily.

As I have said, we cannot have research journals in about a dozen languages. Apart from the cost involved, the utility of such journals will be greatly diminished, if not destroyed, even for this country, not to speak of their being used in foreign countries. If they are conducted in the common language, they will be available to all research workers in the country at least and if they are of a standard high enough to command respect of scholars outside the country, the common language will be studied by foreign scholars also for keeping themselves up to date.

WIDENING THE SCOPE

Therefore, what I contemplate is that as the study of the common language advances and deepens, it would be utilised more and more in all spheres of activity where the appeal has not to remain confined to the limited regions but is addressed to the country as a whole. I do not know and cannot say at this stage when, if ever, it will be possible for all the High Courts to accept the common language for their purposes. If that is not accepted, then in that case there is no doubt that their important decisions on law, as also, under the like contingency, all the laws passed by the legislatures in the different regions will have to be made available in translation in the common language to the rest of the country and the accuracy of the translation will have to be guaranteed by the authorities concerned.

Unless at least this much is done, it will be impossible for the different regions to keep themselves posted with the affairs of the other Provinces. I also contemplate that in every Province there will be some newspapers in the common language which will circulate all over the country just as English newspapers do today.

If all this has to be done, then there is no escape from the fact that universities and other educational institutions should be able to give instruction in the common language of a pretty high order so that university students who care to go in for high administrative posts, for a political career and for high scientific and technical attainments, journalism, etc., should be able to attain high proficiency in the common language. For this purpose, study of the common language as a second language will have to be made compulsory from the high school stage onwards, in every Province, and its study will have to be encouraged in every way.

No one need be frightened by this. I think Indians have a genius for learning languages and once this position is understood they will not take much time in mastering the common language whatever their own language might be. English is completely a foreign language and yet the very first generation of students after its introduction showed high proficiency in it. Ever since then proficiency in the English language acquired by the Indians has not increased; knowledge of the English language has spread only in extent, not in depth.

There is, therefore, no fear that if systematic instruction is started, any particular region will be left behind in the race of life. Such apprehension as there may be can easily be removed by some device for removing undue advantage which any particular region may have in this respect.

USE OF SANSKRIT

Shri Mashruwala's second reference is as follows: "The knotty and controversial point with regard to the eighth clause of your excellent conclusions is not that several new words will have to be drawn from Sanskrit, but the type of

the words and the way in which they will be drawn or coined from the language. I strongly feel that the coined words should be such as would fit in well with the structure and genius of our spoken languages, and be lovable for their simplicity to ordinary men, women and children of all Provinces for their sounds and pronunciations. They must avoid pedantry and love for ostentation in style as much as possible."

I have suggested in the eighth conclusion of my article Sanskrit as a source from which we shall have to draw if we have to coin new words. I agree that in this matter pedantry should be avoided and as far as possible coined words should fit in with the structure and genius of the spoken language and be lovable for their simplicity. How far that will be possible, it is difficult to say, but there is no doubt that our efforts should be in that direction.

*The date when this article was published is not known

59. Copy of a letter from some Congress workers of Sialkot to the President of the Punjab Provincial Congress Committee*

Sir,

We the undersigned workers of Sialkot district regret to know that L. Kidar Nath Sahgal's nomination papers have been rejected on technical grounds. It is really unfortunate that no second Congress candidate was put up in that constituency to take the place of L. Kidar Nath Sahgal in case his nomination papers were rejected. We further regret to say that no steps were taken by you to obtain our opinion on the matter. We now, however, feel that the Congress should in no case lose this seat and that in no case should the seat be allowed to go to Lala Amar Nath of Ahnampur, one of the two candidates, because he has already betrayed the Congress by resigning from the primary membership of the Congress and refusing to resign his seat in the Sialkot District Board, which he secured on Congress ticket. We are therefore definitely of the opinion that the only course left for the Congress under the circumstances is to adopt Mr. Besheshar Nath as a Congress candidate.

We strongly feel that under the circumstances that is the only way left for re-establishing Congress prestige in the Province generally and in our constituency particularly. We are absolutely clear in our mind that if the Congress does not adopt him as a candidate under the circumstances, it will be a capital blunder on the part of the Congress.

Yours faithfully,
I. Banarsi Dass, President,
District Congress Committee,
Sialkot.

2. Bhagat Singh, B.A., General Secretary, District Congress Committee, Sialkot.
3. Ahmed Din, Vice-President, District Congress Committee, Sialkot.
4. Jamna Dass, President, Tahsil Congress Committee, Pasrur
5. Labh Singh, Member, Congress Committee, Daska.
6. Chaman Lal, Secretary, Congress Committee, Shahzada, Dt. Sialkot.
7. Om Prakash, Treasurer, Congress Committee, Shahzada, Dt. Sialkot.
8. Krishan Gopal Dutt, M.L.A.
9. Des Raj, Congress Treasurer, Baddomalli.
10. Kishen Das, Sialkot.

*The letter bears no date

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